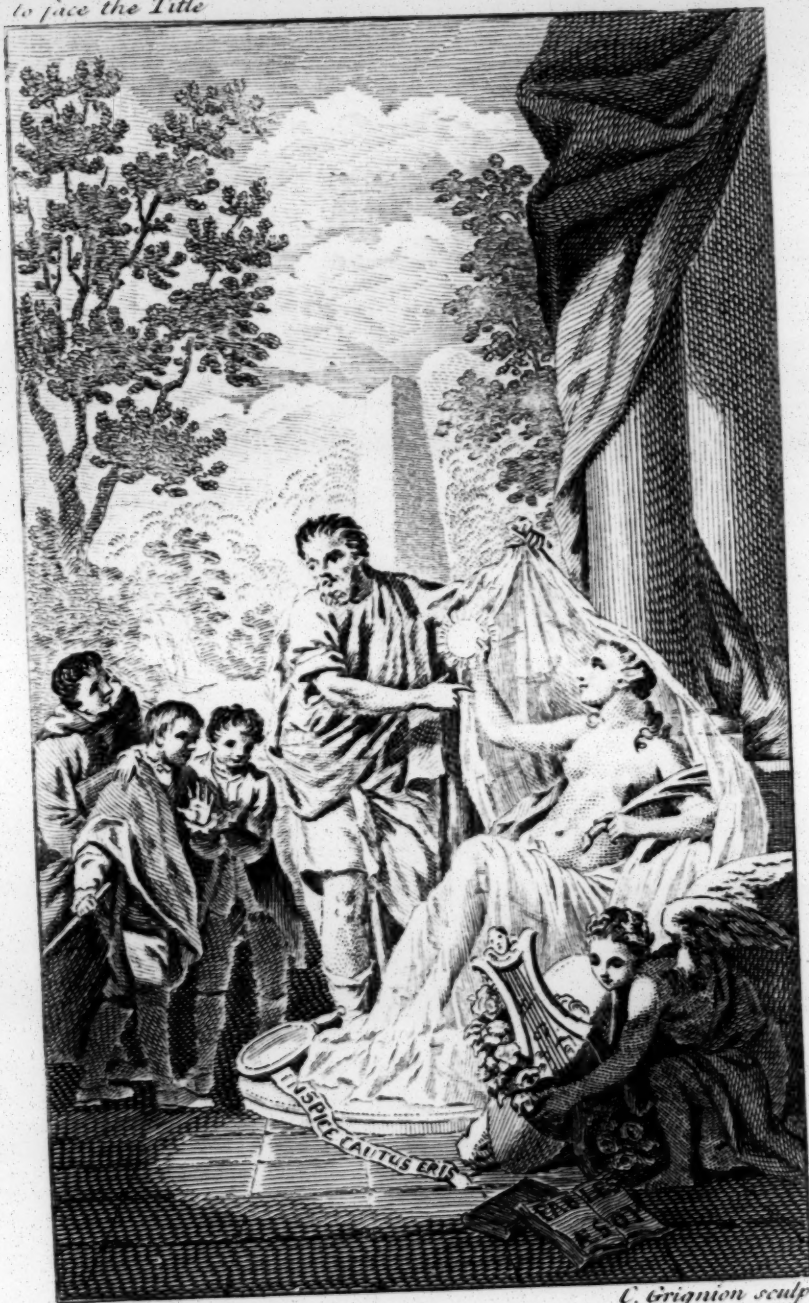


to face the Title



C. Grignion sculp.

SELECT FABLES
OF
ESOP
AND OTHER FABULISTS.

IN THREE BOOKS.

By R. DODSLEY.

————— Is not the earth
With various living creatures, and the air
Replenished, and all those at thy command
To come and play before thee? Knowest thou not
Their language and their ways? They also know,
And reason not contemptibly: with these
Find pastime. Paradise Lost, b. 8. l. 370.

A NEW EDITION.



L O N D O N:

Printed for J. DODSLEY, in Pall-mall. 1776.

[Price bound Three Shillings.]



61...1539.40

T H E
P R E F A C E.

*T*HE fables of Esop have always been esteemed the best lessons for youth, as being well adapted to convey the most useful maxims, in a very agreeable manner. Accordingly, many writers, both in verse and prose, have endeavoured to clothe them in an English dress. It would ill become the Author of this work to animadvert upon their labours: but he thinks it may be said with truth, and he hopes with modesty, that nothing of this kind, which has been published in prose, can justly discourage him from the present undertaking.

In forming this collection, he has endeavoured to distinguish by two separate books, the respective compositions of the

earlier and later mythologists; and he trusts it will not be found that he has often been mistaken in this distribution, tho' an error of that kind might perhaps appear of no great importance. His principal aim was to select such Fables as would make the strongest and most useful impressions on the minds of youth; and then to offer them in such unaffected language, as might have some tendency to improve their style. If in this he should be allowed to have at all succeeded, the work, it is presumed, will not be unserviceable to young readers, nor wholly unenterprising to persons of maturer judgment.

To these he has ventured to add a third Book, consisting entirely of original Fables; and he offers it to the public with all the diffidence which ought to accompany modern productions, when they
appear

appear in conjunction with writings of established reputation. Indeed, whatever hopes he has, that the present work may be favourably received, arise chiefly from the consideration, that he has been assisted in it by gentlemen of the most distinguished abilities; and that several, both of the old and the new Fables, are not written by himself, but by authors with whom it is an honour to be connected; and who having condescended to favour him with their assistance, have given him an opportunity of making some atonement for his own defects.

The life of Esop prefixed to the former editions of these fables, having been thought not so full and satisfactory as it might have been, a learned and ingenious friend has been so kind as to consult the ancient writers who have made any men-

tion of Esop. He hopes he has added many facts and anecdotes of his life, not hitherto taken notice of; and that he has set his character in a clearer and better light than it has hitherto appeared.

The Author has nothing further to add to this preface, than his thanks to the public for their candid reception of the work; and to acquaint his readers, that as their favour has enabled him in a few months to print a third edition of it, he has laid hold of the opportunity, and endeavoured by the assistance of his friends, and by his own repeated applications, to render it less unworthy of that indulgence with which it has been honoured.

A N E W

A NEW
LIFE of ESOP.

COLLECTED FROM
ANCIENT WRITERS.

By a LEARNED FRIEND.

1800

1800

1800

1800

1800

A NEW
LIFE of ESOP.

IN recording the lives of such persons as have made themselves remarkable only by their writings, and who flourished at a very wide distance from our own times; the great difficulty, in general, is to collect sufficient memorials: but in giving an account of Esop, there arises a particular difficulty, from the many falsehoods which have been so long and so confidently asserted concerning him. I shall therefore first endeavour to clear the ground from these; and then to collect from writers of good credit what may be related of him with more probability.

The great distorter both of Esop's life and person, is one Planudes; an eastern monk, who lived at Constantinople^a, toward the end of the 14th century. He published several fables in Greek, under

^a Fabricius says he flourished in the year 1380. Bibl. Græca, Lib. 3. cap. 28. p. 693.

the name of Esop; and prefixed a life of him to his edition of them; in which he is supposed^b, by very good judges, to have confounded the oriental fabulist, Lokman, with Esop; and to have attributed what may have been true of the former, to the latter. Lokman^c is described as deformed; of a black complexion, with thick lips, and splay feet: Planudes has since formed his picture of Esop; and the artists have been too ready to follow his description of him^d almost ever since. Planudes, as usual, does this without any authority from the Greek and Roman writers, who preceded him; and takes the same liberty, in making Esop travel into Assyria and Egypt. He has not only abused his person, but represents him more like an idle buffoon, than a man of deep morality, and great wisdom, which seems to have been his true character. Planudes is also^e supposed to have

^b Sale's Koran, p. 335.

^c Ibid.

^d Alsop, although a writer on the side of Mr. Boyle, in the famous dispute with Dr. Bentley, prefixed a picture of Esop to his fables, in which he is represented as a handsome person.

^e By Vavassor; de ludicra dictione, p. 21. and Henry Stevens; who in his Thesaurus Linguae Græcæ has never quoted his fables. Bayle, Art. Æs. Note K.

written

written many of the fables himself, which he gave to the world as Esop's : and, indeed his fictions very often betray their author, who was a mean writer as well as a false one. In the fables he makes Esop quote ^f Euripides, who was not born till almost 80 years after his death ; and speaks of the ^g Piræus as the port of Athens, which did not exist till above 80 years later. Demades the rhetorician, is the subject of one of them ; who was a rival of Demosthenes, and consequently lived above 150 years after Esop : and in the moral of another, he goes so far as to mention ^h the order of monks, which did not subsist till near a thousand years after him. In the same manner, in the life of Esop, he makes him go to the court of Nectanebus in Egypt, whereas Nectanebus did not reign there till 200 years afterwards : he carries him likewise to that of king Lycerus at Babylon, who never reigned there at all ; and indeed is only a king of his own creation.

^f Bayle, Art. *Æs.* Note B.

^g Bayle, *ibid.* Note K. 42.

^h He also makes him use words and sentiments in the scripture stile rather than the heathen. Bayle, Note K. 43.

From

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From all these fictions, mistakes, and absurdities, when considered together, it must sufficiently appear, that Planudes ought to be rejected, as an evidence of no credit at all; and I shall therefore, in the following account, lay him entirely aside: together with Philostratus's tale of Mercury's visit to Esop, in the early part of his life; and those other legendary stories of his being engagedⁱ in two battles, and writing two books, after he was dead.

To leave these wild and visionary writers, for something more certain; it appears from authors of very good credit, that Esop flourished in the^k time of the seven famous sages of Greece: and notwithstanding almost as many^l countries might lay

ⁱ Meziriac's life of Esop, chap. 8. — Both mentioned by Bayle; Art. *Æs.* Notes C, and N. — What Photius quotes from an ancient writer, seems to be only the title of a chapter. Ω; ΔΙΤΩΠΘ, ΑΝΑΙΣΕΔΕΙΣ ΥΠΟ ΔΙΛΦΩΙ, ΑΝΕΒΙΩΣΕ ΚΥ ΣΥΜΜΑΧΗΣΕ ΤΟΙΣ ΕΛΛΗΣΙ ΠΕΡΙ ΘΕΡΜΟΠΥΛΗΣ. Bibliothec. Numb. 190.

^k Laertius, in Chilo.

^l Maximus Tyrius names Sardis in Lydia, for the birth-place of Esop. *Diss.* 20. And Phrygia. *Diss.* 33. — Julian, the island of Samos. *Orat.* 7. p. 207. — Suidas, the island of Samos, &c. — The scholiast of Aristophanes, and Heraclides (in Gronovius *Thef.*

lay in their claim for him, as there were cities which contended for being the birth-place of Homer, he was most probably a native of Phrygia. Many authors affirm it, in general; and one in particular, says, that he was born in ^mCotizæum, a city of that province in the Lesser Asia.

Esop was probably of low parentage; for the whole that we hear of him in his youth is, that he was aⁿ shepherd's boy, and afterwards a slave. His first master, in that capacity, was ^oCaresias, of Athens. In that city he had a fair opportunity of learning the Grecian language in its perfection: and there also he might be led to the thought of writing fables, from the mode of instruction then in fashion; which

Thef. Gr. Tom. 6. p. 2897.) Mesembria, a city in Thrace.——And besides several of the persons before mentioned, Lucian, Phædrus, Aulus Gellius, and Stobæus, speaks of him as a Phrygian. So that the weight of authority is much the most prevalent for his being born in Phrygia; and if the account of the proverb (mentioned p. xx) be true, that alone would make all other authorities quite unnecessary.

^m Suidas.

ⁿ Philostratus; in the life of Appolonius, Lib. 56. 5.

^o Meziriac, ch. 2. from Aphthonius. Bayle calls him Carasius, as from Meziriac.

was

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was by conveying it in moral sentences, or proverbs; and a fable (in Esop's manner) is nothing else but a story invented for that purpose. It is also said, (and I think with very good reason) that Esop chose this method^p, because his station as a slave would otherwise have weakened his authority; which defect he was willing to supply by the strength and beauty of his allegories.

His next master after Carefias, was^q Xanthus; and his third, Idmon^r, surnamed the Wise, of the Island of Samos. It was with the last, that he had the famous Rhodopis for his fellow-slave, according to Herodotus and Plutarch; and according to Pliny^s, she was his wife, or mate,

^p Meziriac, ch. 3. ——— probably from Phædrus Introd. to Lib. 3. ver. 33, to 38.

^q Suidas.

^r So Plutarch calls him; *de serâ numinis vindictâ*, p. 556, 557. ——— Herodotus calls him Jadmon, B. 2. c. 134.

^s *Minimam ex his, (the pyramids of Egypt) sed laudatissimam, a Rhodope meretricula factam, Æsopi, fabularum philosophi, conserva quondam, & contubernalis, hæc fuit. Plin. L. 36. c. 12.*

Contubernalis signified of old the (wife, or) mate, of a slave—Qualicumque villico contubernalis mulier afflig-

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mate, during his servitude there. It was the same Rhodopis, who afterwards became so celebrated, and so extremely rich. Idmon was so much pleased with the behaviour and wisdom of Esop, that after having been some time in his service, he gave him " his liberty.

Esop, after having obtained his freedom, gradually acquired so great a reputa-

assignanda est; quæ contineat eum, & in quibusdam rebus adjuvet. Columella, de Re Rust. L. 1. c. 8.--Contubernalis mulier propriè dicitur servi; nam uxoris nomen in liberâ tantum ponitur. Scævola, de fidei Com. Lib. Leg. Thais 45, S. 15---Contubernium propriè servile connubium. Paul. Lib. Sent. 2. c. 10.

There is some reason to imagine they were a remarkably handsome couple: for as she is said to have had her name from the beauty of her complexion, (*Ροδοῦ & ὠπτις*;) he seems to me to have had his, from the particular sparkling of his eyes: (*Αἰσῶ*, the future tense of *Αἰδῶ*, & *ὠψ*.)

She made a noble present to the temple at Delphi, from the tenth of her substance, according to Herodotus; and Pliny says she built one of the famous pyramids of Egypt. Nat. Hist. Lib. 36. c. 12. Herodotus says, the pyramid ascribed to her was built long before her time; and that tho' she was very rich, she could not have been able to sustain the immense charge of that building. B. 2. ch. 134, and 135.

" Meziriac, ch. 4. from the scholiast on Aristophanes's Aves, Herodotus, and Plutarch.

tion,



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tion, that at length he was considered as equal to the most celebrated^w of the seven sages of Greece, his contemporaries: so that what Horace said of Stertinius, perhaps in his humorous way^x; "That he was the eighth of the wise men;" might be said of Esop very seriously; nay, there are some who very much prefer his manner of instruction to that of the philosophers just mentioned^y; and give good reasons for their opinion. He was well acquainted with those great men, particularly with Solon and Chilo. He was received with them in the court^z of Periander, King of Corinth; who himself was one of the number; and in that of Cræsus, King of Lydia, in his capital of Sardis. He was

^w Meziriac, chap. 5.

^x Hor. Lib. 2. sat. 3. 296.

^y *Æsopus ille, e Phrygia fabulator, haud immerito sapiens existimatus est: quum quæ utilia monitu suasuque erant, non severè, non imperiosè, præcepit & sensuit, ut Philosophis mos est; sed festivos delectabilesque apologos commentus, res salubriter ac prospicienter animadversas, in mentes animosque hominum cum audiendi quâdam illecebrâ induxit. Aulus Gellius, Noctes Att. L. 2. c. 29.*

^z Sent thither by Cræsus; Plutarch's *Convivium Sapient.*

much

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much beloved ^a by that prince; and it was in his court that Esop shewed he had more wisdom, or at least more political wisdom, than all of them; on the following occasion: Cræsus ^b, after having shewn these sages the magnificence of his court, and the vastness of his riches, asked them, "Whom they thought the happiest man?" Some of them named one, and some another: Solon (whom I think without injury we may look upon as superior to all the rest) in his answer gave two instances. The first was that of one Tellus, a poor Athenian, but of great virtues; who had eminently distinguished himself by his care and education of his family, and at last lost his life in fighting for his country: the other was of two brothers, who had given a very remarkable proof of their filial piety, and were in reward for it taken out of this life by the Gods, the very night after they had performed so dutiful an action: and concluded with adding that he had given such instances, because no one could be pronounced hap-

^a Διατίθηε παρὰ Κρείσσῃ φιλάμενος. Suidas. Art. *Æsopas*.

^b Meziriac, ch. 5.--Plutarch in the Life of Solon.

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py before his death. Esop, who was one of the company, and perceived that the King was not well satisfied with any of their answers, being asked the same question, replied; "That for his part he was persuaded that Cræsus had as much pre-eminence in happiness over all other men, as the sea has over all the rivers." The King was so much pleased with this compliment, that he eagerly pronounced that sentence, which afterwards became a common proverb; "The Phrygian has hit the mark!" Soon after this happened, Solon took his leave of Cræsus; and was dismissed very coolly. Esop, on his departure, accompanied him part of his journey; and as they were on the road, took an opportunity of saying to him, "O Solon, either we must not speak to kings, or we must say what will please them." "On the contrary," replied Solon, "we should either not speak to kings at all, or we should give them good and useful advice." So great was the steadiness of the chief of the sages, and such the courtliness of Esop.

‘ Plutarch’s Life of Solon.

Meziriac

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Meziriac, in his life of Esop, ^d seems, like a true Frenchman, to be pleased with him for this instance of his complaisance. He says, that "his residing in the court of so mighty a king as Cræsus, rendered him more polite than most of the other philosophers of his time; more compliant with the humour of princes; and more reconciled to monarchical government." Esop gave another instance of the latter, in a visit which he made to Athens; soon ^e after Pisistratus, by his artifices practised on the people, had attained the highest point of his ambition, and made himself master of his country. The people repented of what they had done, and began to murmur: Esop, on this occasion, instead of inventing a Fable to shew Pisistratus how glorious it would be for him to restore liberty to the Athenians; composed one to persuade that people to submit quietly to the power which he had usurped over them. It is one of the first of those which Phædrus has translated from Esop. In his introduction to it,

^d Chap. 5.

^e Phædrus, Lib. 1. Fab. 2, 6.

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Phædrus ^f intimates that Pisistratus was a good prince; and it is very true, that in his administration ^g he was not a bad one; but had not Esop been so well reconciled to monarchical government, as Meziriac thinks, and as Plutarch ^h proves he was; he would naturally have taken the part of the enslaved people, rather than that of their enslaver.

Esop, however, in all instances where courts and the masters of them were not concerned, seems to have gone as far in the pursuit of wisdom as any of the sages. When ⁱ Chilo, one of the seven, asked him while yet but a young man, "What God was doing?" Esop immediately answered. "That he was depressing the proud, and exalting the humble:" an answer which Mr. Bayle calls ^k wonderful; and descants very largely upon it. Remarkable too was his idea of the miseries of mankind, as appears from an observation he frequently

^f Phædrus, Lib. 1. Fab. 2, 7.

^g Plutarch, in his Life of Solon.

^h In the little dispute between him and Solon at the banquet of the Sages, p. 151, C. &c.

ⁱ Laertius, Art. Chilo.

^k Bayle, Art. Æs. note I.

made,

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made¹, "That Prometheus, having taken earth to form mankind, tempered and moistened it, not with water, but with tears." From this little specimen of his sentiments and reflections^m one cannot but regret our not having a greater number of them preserved to us.

Esop dedicated his services, in the latter part of his life, to Cræsus; and after some other embassies or employs, was sent by that monarchⁿ to the city of Delphi, with a large sum of money; in order to offer magnificent sacrifices to Apollo, and

¹ Mez. chap. 6. From Themistius: Orat. 32.

^m His idea in relation to proper relaxations of the mind, is expressed in the strong oriental way by Phædrus, in the fourteenth fable of his third Book: and he makes him speak with a great air of authority on another occasion; where he represents him as wiser than all the people of Athens taken together:

O si maneret condito sensus patri
Quam graviter ferret, quod voluntatem suam
Interpretari non potuissent Attici!

Lib. 4. Fab. 4.

ⁿ Scholiast on Aristophanes's Wasps, ver. 1437, and Plutarch, on the Certainty of the Divine Vengeance, though deferred, tom. ii. p. 557.

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to distribute ° four minæ of silver to each citizen. During his residence among them, he conceived so great a dislike to the manners and morals of the Delphians, and spoke of their misconduct with so much freedom, that he extremely provoked them. Among other things, he reproached them with having scarcely any arable land; and observed, "That were it not for the great concourse of strangers, and the vast offerings made in their temple, they would soon be reduced to the extremity of hunger." Not satisfied with offending them in words, he proceeded to deeds; for having performed the sacrifices in the manner that Cræsus had ordered, he sent back the rest of the money to the city of Sardis; as judging the Delphians not worthy to partake of the king's liberality. This irritated them against him to such a degree, that they consulted how they might be revenged; and accordingly entered into a conspiracy to take away his life by a notorious piece of villainy. They

° Twelve pounds a man; the silver mina being twelve ounces, or three pounds of our money; according to Ainsworth.

hid among his baggage one of ^p the golden vessels consecrated to Apollo; and soon after Esop was set out on his return, they dispatched messengers after him, who overtook him in his way to Phocis, charged him with the theft; and on searching, produced the vessel which they themselves had procured to be secretly conveyed into his baggage. Upon this pretence they immediately drag him to Delphi, throw him into prison, accuse him of sacrilege, and sentence him to be precipitated from the rock Hyampia; which was their usual punishment for sacrilegious persons. As they were on the point of throwing him down the rock, he obtained leave to speak in his defence; and delivered, in his usual manner, a fable. It was that of the Eagle ^a and the Beetle; the purport of which

^p Aristoph. and Theraclides, in Gronov. Thes. Gr. tom. 6. p. 2830.

^a Mentioned by the Scholiast on Aristoph. in Pace V. 177, and Vesp. 1437. That Scholiast gives us the Fable itself, in a manner a good deal different from the modern way of telling the story; but I should imagine not in so good an one, Esop probably told it himself.

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was to shew, " That the weakeſt may ſometimes procure vengeance againſt the moſt powerful, when greatly injured by them : " but the enraged Delphians paid no regard either to his fable, or its moral. They only increaſed their clamours againſt him ; and without any mercy hurried him down the precipice. However, Heaven, (as the old writers obſerve) did inflict that vengeance on the Delphians, which he had thus, in a ſort of prophetic ſpirit, foretold. Their land was rendered barren; and they were afflicted with many ſtrange diſtempers for ſeveral years afterwards. In this diſtreſs they conſulted the oracle ; and were answered, that all their miſeries were owing to the unjuſt condemnation and death of Eſop. In conſequence of this answer, they cauſed a proclamation to be made by ſound of trumpet, at ſome of the moſt public feaſts and general meetings of the Greeks ; that " whoever bore any relation to Eſop, and would demand ſatisfaction for his death, was deſired to come and exact it from the Delphians, in what manner he pleaſed." There was none who pretended to any right in
this

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this affair, till the third generation: when a Samian appeared, named Idmon^r; a grandson of that Idmon, who had been master of Esop, in the Island of Samos: and the Delphians, having made him the satisfaction he desired, were delivered from their calamities.

According to Eusebius, the death of Esop happened in the ^rfourth year of the fifty-fourth Olympiad; which was 561 years before the Christian Æra.

If we were to follow probability rather than the assertions of some writers in the lower ages, I should be more apt to think that Esop was of a handsome countenance and shape, than ugly and deformed; notwithstanding the general prepossession to the contrary, which has prevailed for the three or four last centuries. There is no author quoted as saying any thing to the disadvantage of Esop's person, till after the fall of all the arts and sciences; and almost a thousand years after his death. The first writer quoted in support of this

^r Herodotus; & Plutarch, de serâ numinis vindictâ.

^s Bayle, Art. Æs. Note C. Meziriac says, the first of the fifty-fourth Olympiad, chap. vi.

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groundless opinion is Stobæus[†]; who has it from I don't know whom; and what is said by this unknown person, relates only to the air of Esop's[‡] countenance; for there is not a word intimated of his resembling an Ethiop; or of his being deformed in any part of his body. Planudes was the first who propagated any fancies of the latter kind; and that probably from his taking[¶] another person for Esop; and not till^{*} about two thousand years after the death of this celebrated mythologist. There is no occasion to oppose this notion of Planudes by searching for any

[†] Esop died 561 years before our *Æra*, and Stobæus (according to Blair's Tables) lived in the beginning of the fifth century after Christ.

[‡] He says that Esop being reproached for having a sour countenance, answered, "Regard not my looks, but my mind." This anonymous authority from Stobæus, I should think might be much overbalanced by that of Philostratus, who lived long before Stobæus; and in his picture of Esop gives him a *pleasing countenance*, even while he is meditating. "Οὐδε οἶμαι τίνα ὑφαίνει μῦθον· το γὰρ μεῖδιον αὐτοῦ προσώπου, καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ καλὰ τῆς γῆς ἐσώτες, τῷ δὲ δήλωσιν. Οἶδεν ὁ ζωγράφος, οἷ αἱ τῶν μύθων φροῦτιδες; ἀνιμῶν τὴν ψυχῆς διορίαι. Phil. Εἰκ. γ'.

[¶] See p. xii.

^{*} He flourished 1941 years after the death of Esop. See note i.

express

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express authorities against him ; it having been so fully proved before ^y that he has totally destroyed all his own credit himself.

Philostratus, in his ^z account of several pictures in the time ^a of the Antonines, gives us one in which Esop is the principal figure. The painter represents him before his own house ; there the Geniuses ^b of the several sorts of Esopian fables approach him with pleasure and regard, as the chief inventor and writer of fables. As such, they adorn him with wreaths of flowers ; and crown him with olive-branches. He has a pleasing smile upon his countenance ;

^y See p. xiii.

^z In Icon. Art. M^{us} 901.

^a From the year 138, to 179 of our *Æra*.

^b There were, probably, three of these Geniuses in the picture ; the Esopian fables being divided into three sorts. " The rational, in which Men only are introduced ; the characterized, where only Beasts, under characters assigned to them ; and the mixt, in which both men and beasts are concerned." From Aphthonius, in *Præexercitum* : one of the Testimon. in Nevelet's edition.

The Genius of each sort of the lesser Fables is made to attend Esop here, as persons ; in the same manner that the Genius of the greater, or Epic, Fable attends Homer ; in the famous relievo of his Apotheosis

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and at the same time his eyes are fixt upon the ground : as being then composing a fable ; and composing it ^c with that humour and gaiety for which he was so remarkable. There are several men, and several beasts intermixt, that form a sort of circle round him ; and among the latter, the Fox is particularly distinguished ; Esop making as much use of him in his fables, as the dramatic writers do of Davus in their comedies. There is a great deal of sense ^d, “ (says Philostratus) express’d in the picture in general ; and particularly, in the looks and attitudes of the three Geniuses, that are paying their regards to him.

In this picture, the countenance of Esop is very well represented, as partly pleasant and partly grave ; but Plutarch has given us a much fuller and stronger picture of his thoughts and manner of conversation. ’Tis in his Feast of the Sages, at the court

^c This seems to be the intent of the painter, tho’ Philostratus gives another turn to it. Οἶδεν οὐ ζῶντα φῶς, says he, οἱ αἱ τῶν μυθῶν φρονιδὸς ἀειμένης τῆς ψυχῆς δευλαί.

^d φιλοσοφεῖ ἢ γραφῇ, καὶ ταῦτοι Μυθῶν σωματῖα.

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of Periander, King of Corinth, who himself was one ^e of the seven. As this is perhaps one of the most valuable remains of antiquity that is left to us; and as Esop has a considerable share in it, I shall take the liberty of inserting it very much at large; though it will bear no proper proportion to the rest of his life: but I think it cannot be unacceptable to the reader; and heartily wish, that the whole was translated into English by some abler hand.

Periander, while the rest of the wise men were all in his court, invites them, and several ^f others, to a feast in one of

^e The other six are Thales, Solon, Cleobulus, Chilo, Bias, and Pittacus: to whom, says Laertius, some add Anacharsis the Scythian, Muso the Kenean, Perecydes the Syrian, Epimenides of Crete, and Pisistratus the tyrant of Athens. In proem. § 13.

^f Besides Periander, and the six Sages (first mentioned in the note before) there were Esop, and Anacharsis the Scythian; Melissa, the wife of Periander; Eumetis her attendant, daughter of Cleobulus one of the Sages, and herself sometimes called Cleoboline, or the little female sage: Naucratis (also called Niloxenus) sent to consult Bias and his brethren, by Amasis King of Egypt; Mnesiphilus, from Athens; Diocles, a priest and augur, in Periander's service; Ardalus, priest of the temple of the Muses, founded by one of his ancestors; Chersias, a poet; and Cleodemus, a physician.

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his pleasure-houses, near the city of Corinth, where he was to make a ^g particular sacrifice to Venus. It was at the foot of the Licæum, or eastern promontory of the Corinthian Isthmus; a place naturally very delightful^h, and much assisted by art: for Periander was a ⁱ lover of magnificence; which, together with his being a tyrant, may possibly account for Lucian's ^k excluding him from his Elysium. Periander ordered a chariot for each of the invited guests, to convey them to the place. When that which was provided for Thales arrives, he smiles; is very much obliged, but chooses to walk through the fields. He does so; and two^l other of the guests accompany him. In their walk, they meet

^g Periander had left off paying any devotions to Venus, ever since his mother had put an end to her life for love; and this was his first return to them, upon some dreams of his wife Melissa. Xylander's Plutarch, fol. vol. 2. p. 146, D.

^h Pausanias, in Corinthiacis.

ⁱ Plutarch, p. 148, B.

^k Lucian says, he saw Anacharsis, Zamolxes, Numa, Lycurgus, Phocion, and Tellus, in Elysium; "and all the seven Sages, except Periander." Tom. . . p. 67, Ed. Blæu.

^l Diocles, the priest and augur; and Naucratis, the ambassador from Amasis, King of Egypt.

with

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with Alexidemus, natural son of the tyrant of Miletus, returning from the villa in a very great heat. A place it seems, at the lowest table, had been assigned for him; and he could not bear to sit beneath "Æolians and Islanders, and ^m people that nobody knows." They pats him, and laugh at his folly. When they come to the dining-room, Thales asks aloud, "Which was the place his countryman had refused?" and when it was shewed to him, sits down in it. Esop opens the conversation; and in order to ridicule the behaviour of Alexidemus, begins with telling a fable of the arrogant mule mortified. After the tables were cleared, and garlands distributed to each of the guests by Melissa, the wife of Periander; Anacharsis says something, a little severely, on the Grecian fashion of using musical instruments in their worship of the Gods: and as this might have produced too serious a debate, Esop turns it off ^a with a jest.

One of this venerable company, was Naucratis, sent by Amasis King of Egypt.

^m Αἰολῖαι, καὶ νησιῶται, καὶ τῆσαι. Plutarch, p. 148, F.

^a Plutarch, p. 150, E.

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to consult Bias, and the other wise men, on a letter he had received from the King of Ethiopia. It was a custom amongst the learned in those days, to send * wise sentences, and puzzling questions, to one

* The taste of the knowing in Esop's time, was to study rules for the conduct of life ; and to make wise sentences or proverbs, for the same purpose. At their tables, they often put questions of this sort to be answered severally ; by as many as chose to do it. They also sent moral questions, from one kingdom to another ; and sometimes puzzling, or enigmatical questions to be resolved. The letter sent by Amasis to Bias was one of the latter kind ; and the questions proposed after it, of the former: the words of the letter are these :

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΙΓΥΠΤΙΩΝ ΑΜΑΣΙΣ ΛΕΓΕΙ ΒΙΑΣΙ ΣΟΦΩΤΑΙΩ ΕΛΛΗΝΩΝ. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΑΙΘΙΟΠΩΝ ΕΧΕΙ ΠΡΟΣ ΕΜΕ ΣΟΦΙΑΣ ΑΜΙΛΛΑΝ. ΗΤΗΜΕΝΟΣ ΔΕ ΤΟΙΣ ΑΛΛΟΙΣ, ΕΠΙ ΠΑΣΙ ΣΥΝΕΔΕΙΚΕΝ ΑΙΟΠΟΝ ΕΠΙΤΑΓΜΑ. ΚΥ ΔΕΙΝΟΝ, ΕΚΠΙΕΩ ΜΕ ΚΙΛΕΥΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑΝ. ΕΣΤΙ ΔΕ ΛΥΣΑΝΤΙ ΜΕΝ, ΕΧΕΙΝ ΚΩΜΑΣ ΤΕ ΚΥ ΠΟΛΕΙΣ ΤΩΝ ΕΚΙΝΩ ΜΗ ΛΙΣΑΝΤΙ ΔΕ ΑΣΙΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΠΕΡΙ ΕΛΕΦΑΝΤΙΝΗΝ ΑΠΟΣΗΝΑΙ. ΣΚΕΨΑΜΕΝΟΣ Ω ΕΥΘΥΣ ΑΠΟΠΕΜΠΕ ΝΕΙΛΟΞΕΝΟΝ ΑΔΕ ΔΕΙ ΦΙΛΟΙΣ ΣΟΙΣ Η ΠΟΛΙΤΑΙΣ ΓΕΝΕΣΘΑΙ ΠΑΡ ΗΜΩΝ, Ξ ΤΑΜΑ ΚΩΛΥΣΕΙ. Plutarch, 151. C.

These puzzling questions, though much inferior to the other sort, were not a corruption of them in these times ; but of the greatest antiquity, as we find by the contention between Homer and Hesiod ; (Plutarch in Conviv. Sap. p. 154.) and the riddle, which Samson puts to the Philistines, 1141 years before our Æra (Judges xiv. 14.)

another;

another; and this intercourse was carried on even between persons of different nations. This letter was of the latter kind; and required Amasis to drink up the sea. It is read, and the ^p difficulty evaded by Bias. Cleodemus, the physician, speaks very justly against these difficult and puzzling questions; but is as unkind in specifying "that they were like Eumetis's riddles; and fit only to be played with by women." Eumetis (who was present as an attendant on Melissa, and was a lady of the greatest sweetness, modesty, and wisdom) at first seemed inclined to answer him; but restrained herself, and blushed. Esop, with great good-nature, saved her from part of her confusion, by making a jest upon the physician and his practice; and by that means called off the eyes of the company from her to him^q. Perian-der then desires each of them to contribute some wise sentence for the benefit of

^p Φράζω τῷ Αἰθιοπῇ, (says Bias) τῆς ἡμετέρας ἐν ταῖς πελάγῃ πόλεμους ἐπισχεῖν, εἰς αὐτὸς ἐκπίνῃ τὴν νύκτα θάλασσαν· περὶ ταύτης γὰρ τὸ ἐπιτάγμα γίνεται, ὃ τῆς ὑπερῶν ἐσομένης. Plut. 151, C.

^q Id. 152. D.

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Amasis and the company. Solon, Bias, Thales, Anacharsis, Cleobulus, Pittacus, and Chilo, gave each of them a piece of advice for kings; and Periander being prest to add his, said, "That the sentences which they had given, were almost sufficient to deter any man of sense from reigning." Esop, on this, speaks of the civility due to princes; digresses into a little dispute with Solon about the preference of monarchical to republican government; but for fear it should grow too serious, soon turns it off (in his usual way) with a piece of humour. Naucratis then resumes his business, and mentions some other questions from Amasis; which are answered by Thales. As the messenger from Amasis had now dispatched all his orders; Mnesiphilus the Athenian proposes to the company, that as they had before given their thoughts of what might be useful to kings, they would now give them, as to what might be beneficial to commonwealths; and the Sages

* Plutarch, 153.

† Ibid. 154, C.

‡ Ibid. 154, D and E.

Speak

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speak each on this subject, in a sententious manner.

Then Diocles, the priest and augur of Perianter, proposes ^a that they may say something on the government of a house and family; since each of the company present had a house to govern. "I deny that," says Esop, for Anacharsis here has only a ^w cart." Anacharsis answers him in his usual grave and solid manner; and desires that his answer to him may at the same time pass as his ^x club toward what was proposed by Diocles. The rest of the Sages give their sentences or sentiments, severally, on the same subject.

Here Melissa and Eumetis ^y withdraw; the company falls into a mixt conversation; and Esop, who had been blamed himself before for a digression from the subject then in hand, tells them

^a Plutarch, 155, A.

^w Anacharsis was a Scythian; and that people had no fixt habitations: but lived in a sort of wag-gons, to shift their places of abode whenever they chose to do so.

^x Ταύτα κ' προς Αισωπὸν ἀποκρίνομαι, κ' προς Διοκλῆα συμβαλλομαι. Plutarch, p. 155, B.

^y Plut. 155, D.

a fable

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a² fable of the Wolf and Shepherds; to shew, that they themselves were now guilty of the same fault. Soon after this, ^a the subject of œconomics is resumed; and Cleobulus being asked what is a competency, begins with mentioning an old vulgar story, about making a coat for the moon; and a fable of Elop's, on a dog's contracting himself in winter, and extending himself in summer: and this enquiry about a competency, leads them into ^b a fuller consideration of temperance, and aliments.

In the close of this, Gorgias, the brother of Periander, comes in from a voyage; and gives an ^c account of the wonderful preservation of Arion, by the dolphins, who carried him to shore, when flung into the sea. Esop. ^d (whether in jest or seriously,) does not seem to believe it: Diocles, in answer to him, refers to the preservation of Phryxus and Helle; and

^a Plutarch, 156, A.

^a 157, A.

^b P. 157 to 160.

^c P. 160 to 162.

^d Οἱ Αἰτωποὶ, " Ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς, ἰφθ, χλευάζετε τὰς ἀμὰς κολοῖας, καὶ κορακάς. εἰ δεχέσθονταί· διελφικὴς δὲ τοιαύτῃ κενωμένωσι. Plutarch, 162, B.

Solon

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Solon says, " These things are above our reach, and must be left to the Gods." Several other stories^c are told of persons assisted by dolphins : and Anacharsis reasons, (as is his way,) very gravely and finely, upon Providence. On their enquiry's growing too nice, and particular, and Esop's quoting several verses out of Homer, Solon takes hold of that opportunity to quote a verse of Homer too ; to put them in mind of its drawing toward bed-time. He^f then proposes a sacrifice ; which they perform, and depart.

It appears upon the whole, from what is^g recorded by Plutarch on this occasion ; that Esop's conversation consisted of a mixture of humour, wit, mirth, and good nature ; and the adapting, or making of fables upon the spot, as occasions arose : and immediately after the perusal of this piece, it first came into my thoughts, that Esop was perhaps a man as full of wit and humour, as our celebrated Dr. Swift ; for

^c Plutarch, p. 163.

^f Id. p. 164.

^g Plutarch in the entrance on this subject, says, there had been false accounts published of it ; and proposes his as a true one.

he scarce ever speaks without exercising one or other of those talents. He might, possibly have been as ^h satirical too; tho' in a more gay, and less disobliging manner: and, indeed, his good-nature is pointed out as strongly as any part of his characterⁱ. His wisdom itself was gay and cheerful; and it was for that very reason, that he has been so often preferred to all the seven Sages of Greece. He was free and open in his discourse: for he speaks frequently; and tho' there were so many in company^k, and so many of high rank and figure, he has (in a manner) the first and last word in their conversation. Phylarch too confirms what has been observed^r by others; that he was very free in intermixing his fables, even in the most common and familiar parts of his discourse.

I have^m already mentioned the reason

ⁿ Καὶ ὁ Αἰσωπος, οἷον ἐλεγκτικός ——— ἐφ' η, &c. Plut. p. 152. — Derisor potiùs, quàm deridendus Senex. Phæd. lib. 3. fab. 14. — For a remarkable instance of his humour, very like Dr. Swift; see the same, lib. 3. fab. 5.

ⁱ In his rescuing a lady of so charming a character as Eumetis, from her confusion, p. 152, D.

^k See note ^f.

^r In particular, by Priscian. See note ^o.

^m P. xv.

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why Æsop might choose to write fables :
and though he certainly was not ⁿ the inven-
tor, he excelled all others so greatly in that
way of writing, that he has generally ^o
been

ⁿ Priscian mentions Archilochus as a writer of fa-
bles, who flourished above a century before Æsop.
(Bayle, Note A.) Quintilian speaks of Hesiod as the
first inventor of them, (id. ib.) who was two centuries
earlier than Archilochus ; and the fable of Jotham
recorded in scripture (Judges, ch. 9. v. 8---20.) is
almost three centuries earlier than Hesiod.

^o Illæ quoque fabulæ, quæ etiam si originem non
ab Æsopo acceperunt, (nam videtur earum primus
author Hesiodus,) nomine tamen Æsopi maximè ce-
lebrantur ; ducere animos solent, præcipuè rustico-
rum & imperitorum : qui et simpliciùs, quæ ficta
sunt, audiunt ; & capti voluptate, faciliè iis quibus
delectantur consentiunt. Quintilian, Instit. Or. Lib.
5. c. 11.

Dictus est Æsopus Ἀγρωπιος, non quòd primus
muta loqui docuerit ; nam ante eum Hesiodus hoc
secerat, in sermone Luscinia ad Accipitrem : sed
quòd præcipuè hoc scribendi genus sectatus est. Me-
nage, in Laertium, Lib. 1. N. 72.

Καλεῖται (μυθος) Ὑδαρίσιος, καὶ Κιλιξ, καὶ Κυπριος,
πρὸς τὰς, εὐροίας μελαδης, πῆλαδης τὰ ονομαλὰ· νικᾷ δὲ
μαχλὸν Ἀνσώπειος λεγέσθαι, τῷ τὸν Ἀνσώπον ἀριστὰ πάντων
συγγραφῇ τὰς μύθους. Apoththonius ; id Præexerci-
tamentis.

Priscian, in speaking of fable, calls Æsop the inven-
tor of it ; but soon after he corrects himself, and adds,
Uti

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been regarded as such; and is called so by several, even of the ancient writers. It appears

Uti sunt eâ vetustissimi quoque autores; Hesiodus, Archilochus, Plautus, Horatius, Nominantur autem ab inventoribus fabularum, aliæ Æsopiæ, aliæ Cypriæ, aliæ Lybicæ, aliæ Sybariticæ; omnes autem communiter Æsopiæ, quoniam in conventibus frequenter, solebat Æsopus fabulis uti. From Bayle, Art. Æsop. Note A.

Nunc fabularum cur sit inventum genus
Brevi docebo. Servitus obnoxia:
Quia quæ volebat non audebat dicere,
Affectus proprios in fabellas transtulit;
Calumniamque fictis elusit jecis:
Ego porro illius semitâ feci viam.

Phædrus, Introd. Lib. 3. ver. 30.

Avienus says in the pref. to his fables; Hujus materiæ ducem nobis Æsopum noveris: qui responso Delphici Apollinis monitus, ridicula orsus est, ut legenda firmaret. From Bayle, Note A. And Apollonius in Philostratus says, "That Æsop, not content with rejecting the fabulous stories of the poets, in favour of wisdom, invented a new method." B. 5. ch. 5. From the same, Note H.

As the word, Ridiculous is always used in a bad sense in English; it may not be improper to observe, that Ridiculous in Latin was used in a good sense, as well as in a bad: and is to be taken in the former, in the quotation here from Avienus. 'Tis as much a commendation of Æsop, as the Festivus et Delectabilis of Gellius, p. xviii. Note 23; or the Hilariora Studia of

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appears very plainly from the words of Socrates and ¹ Phædrus, each of whom translated some of the fables of Esop, that he wrote them in prose; though the invention which generally attends them, and which is the more essential part in poetry, made the former regard them as a poetical work.

The distinguishing character of Esop's

of Seneca, p. xlviii. Note 6. Thus where Horace is preferring the humorous sort of satyr to the severe, he says;

Ridiculum acri

Fortius ac melius magnas plerumque fecat res.

Lib. 1. Sat. 10. ver. 15.

And Phædrus, speaking of Esop's works, attributes half of their merit to this:

Duplex libelli dos est; quod risum movet,

Et quod prudenti vitam consilio monet.

Introduct. Lib. 1. ver. 4.

I suppose the Greeks used Γελοιος of him, in the same manner. Αισωπος Γελοιος ουτως ελεγον της Αισωπου μυθου. Hesychius.

Ρ Εποιησας ει τον ποιητην δεοι, ειπερ μελλοι ποιητης ειναι, ποιειν μυθου αλλ' ε λογιος κ' αεισος εκ ην μυθολογικου διαλευα, ως προχειρες ειχον κ' ηπισηαμην μυθου της Αισωπου, τηλων εποιησα ως αρωτοις ενειυχον. Socrates, in Plato's Phædo.

¹ Æsopus auctor quam materiam repperit,

Hanc ego POLIVI versibus senariis.

Phædrus, Introduct. Lib. 1. ver. 2.

stile

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style seems to have been that of an ' elegant simplicity ; it was very ' plain, short, and clear ; and his writings have been highly admired for their good sense, and usefulness, in all ages. The plans of his fables are commended for the same ' elegance, as his

' Quisquamne ita nitet, ut comparatus tibi non fordeat ? Quis ita ad *Æsopi venustatem*, quis ad sophisticas Isocratis conclusiones, quis ad enthymemata Demosthenis, aut opulentiam Tullianam, aut proprietatem nostri Maronis ; quis ita affectet singula, ut tu imples omnia ; Aufonius, in his Epistle to Symmachus : vol. 2. p. 642. Ed. Var.

' This appears very evidently, even from the imitations of his writings. Phædrus's style has commonly been admired for its particular simplicity and neatness ; and he says, very strongly, that he imitates Esop in his manner, as well as in his matter :

Librum exarabo tertium *Æsopi* stilo.

L. 3. Prol. ver. 30.

Laertius has preserved a couplet in Socrates's translation of one of his fables ; remarkable, only, for its particular plainness.

Αἰσώπῳ πολελεῖ Κορινθίων αἰγὺ νηυσί,
Μη κρίνειν ἀρετὴν λαοδικῶ σοφίῃ.

And the fables which Plutarch (in his Banquet of the Sages) has put into Esop's own mouth, are remarkably short and clear.

' In quibusdam [fabulis] et argumentum ex ficto locatur, et per mendacia ipse relationis ordo contextitur ; ut sunt illa *Æsopi* fabulæ ; elegantia fictionis illustres. Macrobius, in Somn. Scrip. Lib. 1. cap. 2.
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file. He has been highly admired for his writings of this kind in all ages. Quintilian recommends them " as the first object in the instruction of children; and Plato, when he is banishing the fabulous stories of Homer and " Hesiod, advises the use of this sort of fables in his Commonwealth; in both of which, he is strongly followed by * Philostratus; who says, " That they were more proper than all other fables, to inspire us with wisdom." The Athenians, in the age when learning was at its greatest perfection among them, shewed their high opinion of Esop, and his writings; by the † noble statue they erected

" Esopi fabellas, quæ fabulis nutricularum proximè succedunt, narrare sermone puro et nihil se supramodum extollente, deinde eandem gracilitatem stilo exigere condiscant. Institut. Orat. 1. c. 9.

" Τῆς δὲ συγκριθείας (μυθοῦς) πειρομένης τὰς τροφὰς τε καὶ μέγιστα λέγειν τοῖς παῖσι· καὶ πλαστεῖν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν τοῖς μυθοῖς, πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ τὰ σώματα ταῖς χερσὶ. Plato De Republica. Lib. 2.

* Philostratus; Book 5. ch. 5.

† Æsopo ingentem statuam posuere Attici.

Phædrus, Epist. to B. 2. ver. 1.

The Greeks used to set up statues, larger than the life, to compliment their kings, heroes, and gods: of this kind the statue here mentioned, in honour of Esop seems to have been.

They

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ed to his memory, and by the celebrated sculptor ² they employed for that purpose.

The great excellence of his way of writing, consists in blending of ³ the agreeable and the instructive so well together : from which Horace might possi-

They set up at the same time, seven statues to the famous coteremporary sages of Greece ; and this statue of Esop at the head of them all. Danet, the commentator to the Delphin edition, on the place ; from the following epigram of Agathias.

Εὐ γὰρ ποῖον, Λυσίππου γέρον, Σικυανίῃ πλατὰ,
 Δεικέλον Αἰσώπῃ γήσαο τῇ Σαμίῳ,
 Ἐπὶ τὰ σοφῶν, ἐμπροσθεν ἔπει κείνοι μὲν ἀναγκῇ
 Ἐμβαλον, οὐ πείθω, φθεγμάσι τοῖς σφέτεροις.
 Ὅς δὲ, σοφοῖς μύθοις καὶ πλάσμασι καίρεια λήξας,
 Παίζων ἐν σπυδῇ πείθει ἐχέφρονας.
 Φινκλον δ' ἡ τρήχεις παρὰ νείσι ἡ Σαμίῳ δὲ
 Τὸ γλυκὺ τοῦ μύθου καλὸν ἐχέει διέλας.

² The great Lyfippus.

³ Thus where Phædrus says that he imitates Esop in his 1st book of Fables, he immediately adds,
 Duplex libelli dos est ; quod risum movet,
 Et quod prudenti vitam consilio monet.

Introd. to B. 1. ver. 4.

A. Gellius prefers him to all the philosophers on this very account ; and Avienus attributes so happy a thought to an inspiration from heaven : (Note 86.) Apollonius did the same, tho' in a different manner ; (Philostratus, B. 5. chap. 5.) the latter supposing this light to have been given him by Mercury, and the former from the oracle at Delphi.

bly

bly take the hint for that rule, which he seems to distinguish^b as the most considerable of any in his Art of Poetry.

'Tis no wonder that works so useful, so pleasing, and so much recommended, were in every body's hands: they were so especially at Athens^c, the great seat of science; and about the time, that arts^d and knowledge were both at their greatest height. The fables of Esop was, generally, the first book^e which was read by their youth, and, perhaps, one of the last, which some of them quitted.

^b Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci;
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.

De Art. Poet. ver. 343.

^c It was a proverbial expression there, for a man who was entirely ignorant; "That he had never read Esop." Οὐδ' Αἰσωπον ἀπαθῆνας. Aristophanes, Aves. ver. 471: or, as it is in Galen. Οὐδε Αἰσωπον μεμασθῆνας. De Simplicibus medicam: xi. The reason of this proverb (as the commentator on Aristophanes says) was "their reading him there with eagerness." ΟΤΙ ΤΟΝ ΛΟΓΟΠΟΙΟΝ Αἰσωπον διζσπαθῆς εἶχον.

^d The Athenians paid that signal compliment to Esop of setting up his statue above those of all the seven Sages, in that great age in which Lysippus and Apelles, and Aristotle, Plato and Xenophon flourished.

^e Fabulas, primum tradere pueris solent — ; quia animos eorum, adhuc molles, ad meliores faciliè vias instituunt vitæ. Priscian.

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^f Plutarch mentions Esop among the authors most proper for forming philosophers; and indeed his distinguishing character was wisdom, attended (as has been shewn before) with a perpetual flow of pleasantry. Phædrus calls him, ^g The Sage; and says ^h, “That he saw through all nature.”

It must be very difficult, at this distance of time, to determine which of the Greek fables that are published as Esop’s, were really of his writing. Several of them may be so; but we do not know how to distinguish them. I should think it more easy, to catch him at the rebound; I mean, in the profest translations of him. Phædrus, the ⁱ first of the Roman poets who wrote fables,

^f Οὐ μόνον τὰ Αἰσωπεῖα μυθάρια, καὶ τὰς αἰνέτικας ὑποθέσεις διερχόμενοι· ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ περὶ τῶν ψυχῶν δογματὰ ἐμμιγμένα μυθολογία μετ’ ἡδονῆς ἀνασινῶσι. De Audiendis Poetis.

^g Sophus. Phæd. Lib. 3. Fab. 14. ver. 9.

^h ——— Naris emunctæ senex.

Natura nunquam verba cui potuit dare.

Id. Lib. 3. Fab. 3. ver. 15.

ⁱ Phædrus, after speaking of Esop, says,

Quoniam occuparet alter ne primus forem,

Ne solus esset studui — Close to B. ii. ver. 6.

^j Tis probable that Phædrus had not published his fables,

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fables, begins with informing his reader that he has ^k turned into verse several of those which (as was remarked before) were written in prose by Æsop. He confirms this frequently afterwards, in general; and has pointed out some in particular, as translated from Æsop. He makes mention of these much oftener toward

fables, when Seneca wrote his Consolation to Polybius, towards the latter end of the reign of Claudius: for that philosopher says in it to his friend: Non audeo te usque eo producere, ut fabellas quoque, & Æsopæos logos, intentatum Romanis ingeniis opus solitâ tibi venustate connectas: difficile est quidem, ut ad hæc hilariora studia jam vehementer perculsus animus tam cito possit accedere.

Seneca, Consol. ad Pol. c. 27.

^k Phædrus Introd. to B. 1. ver. 2.

^l L. 4. fab 2, 3, & 10.—L. 4. fab. 16. He mentions Æsop and his actions in several others; but does not say those fables themselves are taken from his. One would think, however, from what he says, Lib. 4. fab. 20. that most of the foregoing fables were taken from Æsop.

Quid judicare cogitur Livor modò,
Licet dissimulet, pulchrè tamen intelligo.
Quicquid putabit esse dignum memoriæ,
Æsopi dicet; si quid minùs adriserit,
A me contendet fictum quovis pignore;
Quem volo refelli jam nunc responso meo:
Sive hoc ineptum, sive laudandum est opus,
Invenit ille, nostra perfecit manus.

C

the

1 THE LIFE OF ESOP.

the beginning of his work, than in the following parts of it; and I am apt to think, that most of the fables ^m in the last book are of his own invention. Avienus, the next Latin fabulist that I know of, though at the distance of several ⁿ centuries, agrees with Phædrus in professing to follow Esop, and giving his book the title of Esopian Fables; but does not point him out as the author of any one of them, in particular.

It has been already said ^p, that Socrates translated some of his Fables. As the Athenians, not long after their putting that great man to death, grew as fond of his memory as they had been cruel to his person; it is probable, that this might also add at the same time to their esteem for Esop and his writings. However that be, this is certain, that it was about fifty years after the death of Socrates, that they erect-

^m From the Introd. to Lib. 5.

ⁿ Avienus, according to Gyraldus, lived in the time of Theodosius and his sons. There are forty-two fables in Elegiac verse, published as his, in Mattair's Corpus Poet. Lat. vol. 2. p. 1338, &c.

^o Hujus materiæ ducem nobis Æsopum noveris, From Bayle, Art. Æs. note A.

^p See note go.

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ed a statue so much in honour of Esop; and about a hundred, that Demetrius Phalareus published an edition of his fables; as Diagoras had indeed done long before, while Socrates was living.

The fables which Planudes published as Esop's, were printed at Milan in 1480; soon after the art of printing was introduced into Italy: and afterwards by Aldus, in 1505. This Aldine edition was followed by several others; and particu-

⁹ Socrates was put to death 400 years before our Æra; and Lyfippus, who made this statue of Esop, was in the height of his reputation under Alexander the Great, whose reign was from 336, to 324 ditto.

^r Demetrius Phalareus (according to Dr. Blair's Tables, whose authority is also followed in the preceding note) was banished from Athens 303 years before our Æra. Fabricius says, that he published a collection of Esopian Fables; *Λογών Αἰσωπειῶν συναγωγή*) Art. Esop. Lib. 5. cap. 80: and another volume, either of his fables, or of anecdotes relating to him: (*Αἰσωπειῶν*) Ibid. cap. 81.

[▪] Diagoras was banished from Athens in the 91st Olympiad; (from 416 to 413, before our Æra.) He published a collection of fables (of the Phrygian, or Esop) under the title of *Φρυγιοὶ Λογοὶ*, according to Tatian; or *Φρυγίων Αἰσώγων*, according to Maximus Tyrius. See Laertius, Lib. 5. cap. 80.---I do not see why these might not have been two distinct works; as well as those of Demetrius Phalareus, mentioned in the foregoing note.

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larly by Robert Stephens, at Paris, in 1546: It contained 149 fables[†]; to which Nevelet added almost as many more, from some manuscripts in the Heidelberg Library, in his edition at Francfort in 1610; but these manuscripts, [as well as that of Planudes,] too often betray their true authors; for the monks are commended in the 3d and the 119th of these additional fables. 'Tis a great pity that a more judicious collection should not be made from all the best, and most authentic manuscripts that could be procured; and perhaps, it should be chiefly from such, as[‡] are previous to the times of Planudes.

[†] His addition made them in all 297. See Fabricius's *Bib. Gr. Art. Esop.*

[‡] Mr. Boyle speaks of one of about 500 years old; which belonged to Vossius, and as he says was then at Leyden. Fabricius doubts it. Montfaucon, in his *Diarium Italicum*, promised to publish the Life of Esop, with the Fables as they were extant before the time of Planudes; from a manuscript in the monastery at St. Mary at Florence. Fabricius, *ibid.*

A N
E S S A Y
O N
F A B L E.

I N T R O D U C T I O N .

WH O E V E R undertakes to compose a Fable, whether of the sublimer and more complex kind, as the epic and dramatic ; or of the lower or more simple, as what has been called the Esopean ; should make it his principal intention to illustrate some one moral or prudential maxim. To this point the composition in all its parts must be directed ; and this will lead him to describe some action proper to enforce the maxim he has chosen. In several respects therefore the greater fable and the less agree. It is the business of both to teach some particular moral, exemplified by an action, and this enlivened by natural incidents. Both

alike must be supported by apposite and proper characters, and both be furnished with sentiments and language suitable to the characters thus employed. I would by no means however infer, that, to produce one of these small pieces requires the same degree of genius as to form an epic or dramatic Fable. All I would insinuate, is, that the apologue has a right to some share of our esteem, from the relation it bears to the poems beforementioned: as it is honourable to spring from a noble stem, although in ever so remote a branch. A perfect fable, even of this inferior kind, seems a much stronger proof of genius than the mere narrative of an event. The latter indeed requires *judgment*: the former, together with judgment, demands an effort of the *imagination*.

Having thus endeavoured to procure these little compositions as much regard as they may fairly claim, I proceed to treat of some particulars most essential to their character.

S E C T. I.

Of the Truth or Moral of a Fable.

'TIS the very essence of a Fable to convey some *moral* or *useful* Truth beneath the shadow of an *allegory*. It is this chiefly that distinguishes a *Fable* from a *Tale*; and indeed gives it the pre-eminence in point of use and dignity. A tale may consist of an event either serious or comic; and, provided it be told agreeably, may be excellent in its *kind*, though it should imply no sort of Moral. But the action or Fable is contrived on *purpose* to teach and to imprint some Truth; and should clearly and obviously include the illustration of it in the very catastrophe.

The *Truth* to be preferred on this occasion should neither be too obvious, nor trite, nor trivial. Such would ill deserve the pains employed in Fable to convey it. As little also should it be one that is very dubious, dark, or controverted. It should be of such a nature as to challenge the assent of every ingenuous and sober judgment; never a point of mere speculation; but tending to *inform* or to *remind* the reader, of the proper means that lead to happiness, or at least to the several duties, decorums, and proprieties of conduct,

duct, which each particular Fable endeavours to enforce.

The reason why Fable has been so much esteemed in all ages and in all countries, is perhaps owing to the *polite* manner in which its maxims are conveyed. The very artifice of giving instruction supposes at least a superiority of wisdom in the adviser; a circumstance by no means favourable to the ready admission of advice. 'Tis the peculiar excellence of Fable to *wave* this air of superiority: it leaves the *reader* to collect the moral; who by thus discovering more than is shewn him, finds his principle of self-love *gratified*, instead of being *disgusted*. The attention is either taken off from the adviser; or, if otherwise, we are at least flattered by his humility and address.

Besides, instruction, as conveyed by Fable, does not only lay aside its lofty mien and supercilious aspect, but appears dressed in all the smiles and graces which can strike the imagination, or engage the passions. It pleases in order to convince; and it imprints its moral so much the deeper, in proportion as it entertains; so that we may be said to feel our duties at the very instant we *comprehend* them.

I am very sensible with what difficulty a Fable is brought to a strict agreement with the foregoing account of it. This, however, ought to be the

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the writer's *aim*. 'Tis the simple manner in which the Morals of Esop are interwoven with his Fables, that distinguishes him, and gives him the preference to all other mythologists. His Mountain delivered of a Mouse, produces the Moral of his Fable, in ridicule of pompous pretenders; and his Crow, when she drops her cheese, lets fall, as it were by accident, the strongest admonition against the power of flattery. There is no need of a separate sentence to explain it; no possibility of impressing it deeper, by that load we too often see of accumulated reflections. Indeed the Fable of the Cock and the precious Stone is in *this* respect very exceptionable. The lesson it inculcates is so dark and ambiguous, that different expositors have given it quite *opposite* interpretations; some imputing the cock's rejection of the diamond to his *wisdom*, and others to his *ignorance*.

Strictly speaking then, one should render needless any *detached* or *explicit* moral. Esop, the father of this kind of writing, disclaimed any such assistance. 'Tis the province of Fable to give it birth in the mind of the person for whom it is intended; otherwise the precept is *direct*, which is contrary to the nature and end of *allegory*. However, in order to give all necessary assistance to young readers, an index is added to this collection, containing the subject or moral of each Fable, to which the reader may occasionally apply.

After all, the *greatest fault* in any composition (for I can hardly allow that *name* to riddles) is *obscurity*. There can be *no* purpose answered by a work that is unintelligible. Annibal Carracci and Raphael himself, rather than risque so unpardonable a fault, have admitted *verbal explanations* into some of their best pictures. It must be confessed, that every story is not capable of telling its own Moral. In a case of this nature, and this only, it should be *expressly* introduced. Perhaps also where the point is doubtful, we ought to shew *enough* for the less acute, even at the hazard of shewing *too much* for the more sagacious; who, for this very reason, that they *are* more sagacious, will pardon a superfluity which is such to *them alone*.

But, on these occasions, it has been matter of dispute, whether the moral is better introduced at the end or beginning of a Fable. Esop, as I said before, universally rejected any separate Moral. Those we *now* find at the close of his Fables, were placed there by other hands. Among the ancients, Phædrus; and Gay, among the moderns, inserted theirs at the *beginning*: La Motte prefers them at the *conclusion*; and Fontaine disposes of them *indiscriminately*, at the beginning or end, as he sees convenient. If, amidst the authority of such great names, I might venture to mention my *own* opinion, I should rather *prefix* them as an *introduction*, than *add* them

as an *appendage*. For I would neither pay my *reader* nor *myself* so bad a compliment, as to suppose, after he had read the Fable, that he was not able to discover its meaning. Besides, when the Moral of a Fable is not very prominent and striking, a leading thought at the beginning puts the reader in a proper track. He knows the game which he pursues: and, like a beagle on a warm scent, he follows the sport with alacrity, in proportion to his intelligence. On the other hand, if he have *no* previous intimation of the design, he is puzzled throughout the Fable; and cannot determine upon its merit without the trouble of a fresh perusal. A ray of light, imparted at first, may shew him the tendency and propriety of every expression as he goes along; but while he travels in the dark, no wonder if he stumble or mistake his way.

S E C T. II.

Of the Action and Incidents proper for a Fable.

IN choosing the action or allegory, three conditions are altogether expedient. 1. It must be *clear*: that is, it ought to shew without equivocation, precisely and obviously, what we intend should be understood. 2. It must be *one* and *entire*: that is, it must not be composed of separate and independent actions, but must tend in all its circumstances to the completion of

IX AN ESSAY ON FABLE.

one single event. 3. It must be *natural*, that is, founded, if not on Truth, at least on Probability; on popular opinion; on that relation and analogy which things bear to one another, when we have gratuitously endowed them with the human faculties of speech and reason. And these conditions are taken from the nature of the human mind; which cannot endure to be embarrassed, to be bewildered, or to be deceived.

A Fable offends against *perspicuity*, when it leaves us doubtful *what* Truth the Fabulist intended to convey. We have a striking example of this in Dr. Croxall's Fable of the creaking wheel. "A coachman, says he, hearing one of his wheels creak, was surprized; but more especially, when he perceived that it was the worst wheel of the whole set, and which he thought had but little pretence to take such a liberty. But, upon his demanding the reason why it did so, the wheel replied, that it was natural for people who laboured under any affliction or calamity to complain." Who would imagine this Fable designed, as the author informs us, for an admonition to repress, or keep our complaints to *ourselves*, or if we must let our sorrows speak, to take care it be done in solitude and retirement. The story of this Fable is not well imagined: at least, if meant to support the Moral which the author has drawn from it,

A Fable

A Fable is faulty in respect to unity, when the several circumstances point *different* ways, and do not center, like so many lines, in one distinct and unambiguous moral. An example of this kind is furnished by *La Motte* in the observation he makes upon Fontaine's two pigeons. "These pigeons had a reciprocal affection for each other. One of them shewing a desire to travel, was earnestly opposed by his companion, but in vain. The former sets out upon his rambles, and encounters a thousand unforeseen dangers; while the latter suffers almost as much at home, through his apprehensions for his roving friend. However, our traveller, after many hairbreadth escapes, returns at length in safety back, and the two pigeons are, once again, mutually happy in each other's company." Now the application of this Fable is utterly vague and uncertain, for want of circumstances to determine, whether the author designed principally to represent the *dangers* of the *Traveller*; his friend's *anxiety* during his *absence*, or their *mutual happiness* on his *return*. Whereas had the travelling pigeon met with no disasters on his way, but only found all pleasures insipid for want of his friend's participation; and had he returned from no other motive than a desire of seeing him again, the whole then had happily closed in this one conspicuous inference, that the presence of a real friend is the most desirable of all gratifications.

The

The last rule I have mentioned, that a Fable should be natural, may be violated several ways. 'Tis opposed, when we make creatures enter into unnatural associations. Thus the sheep or the goat must not be made to hunt with the lion; and it is yet more absurd, to represent the lion as falling in love with the forester's daughter. 'Tis infringed, by ascribing to them appetites and passions that are not consistent with their known characters; or else by employing them in such occupations, as are foreign and unsuitable to their respective natures. A fox should not be said to long for grapes; an hedge-hog pretend to drive away flies; nor a partridge offer his service to delve in a vineyard. A ponderous iron and an earthen vase, should not swim together down a river; and he that should make his goose lay golden eggs, would shew a luxuriant *fancy*, but very little *judgment*. In short, nothing besides the faculty of speech and reason, which Fable has been allowed to confer, even upon inanimates, must ever *contradict* the nature of things, or at least the commonly received opinions concerning them.

Opinions indeed, although *erroneous*, if they either *are*, or *have* been universally received, may afford sufficient foundation for a Fable. The mandrake, *here*, may be made to utter groans; and the dying swan to pour forth her elegy. The sphynx and the phoenix, the syren and the centaur,

taur, have all the existence that is requisite for Fable. Nay, the goblin, the fairy, and even the man in the moon, may have each his province allotted him, provided it be not an *improper* one. Here the notoriety of opinion supplies the place of fact, and in *this manner* truth may fairly be deduced from falsehood.

Concerning the incidents proper for Fable, it is a rule without exception, that they ought always to be *few*; it being foreign to the nature of this composition to admit of much variety. Yet a Fable with only *one* single incident may possibly appear too naked. If Esop and Phædrus are herein sometimes too sparing, Fontaine and La Motte are as often too profuse. In this, as in most other matters, a medium certainly is best. In a word, the incidents should not only be few, but short; and like those in the fables of "the swallow and other birds," "the miller and his son," and "the court and country mouse," they must naturally arise out of the subject, and serve to illustrate and enforce the Moral.

S E C T. III.

Of the Persons, Characters, and Sentiments of Fable.

THE race of animals *first* present themselves as the proper actors in this little drama. They are indeed a species that approaches, in many respects, so near to our own, that we need only lend them *speech*, in order to produce a striking resemblance. It would however be unreasonable to expect a strict and universal similitude. There is a certain *measure* and *degree* of analogy, with which the most discerning reader will rest contented: for instance, he will accept the *properties* of animals, although *necessary* and *invariable*, as the images of our *inclinations*, though never so *free*. To require *more* than this, were to sap the very foundations of allegory; and even to deprive ourselves of half the pleasure that flows from poetry in general.

Solomon sends us to the ant, to learn the wisdom of industry: and our inimitable ethic poet introduces Nature herself as giving us a *similar* kind of counsel.

Thus then to Man the Voice of Nature spake:

"Go, from the Creatures thy instructions take—

"There all the forms of social union find,

"And thence let reason late instruct mankind."

He

He supposes that animals in their *native* characters, *without* the advantages of speech and reason, which are assigned them by the Fabulists, may, in regard to *Morals* as well as *Arts*, become examples to the human race. Indeed, I am afraid we have so far deviated into ascetic appetites and fantastic manners, as to find the expediency of copying from *them* that simplicity we ourselves have lost. If animals in themselves may be thus exemplary, how much more may they be made instructive, under the direction of an able Fabulist; who, by conferring upon them the gift of language, contrives to make their instincts more intelligible, and their examples more determinate!

But these are not his *only* actors. The Fabulist has one advantage over all other writers whatsoever; as all the works both of art and nature are more immediately at his disposal. He has, in this respect, a liberty not allowed to epic, or dramatic writers; who are undoubtedly more limited in the choice of persons to be employed. He has authority to press into his service every kind of existence under heaven: not only beasts, birds, insects, and all the animal creation; but flowers, shrubs, trees, and all the tribe of vegetables. Even mountains, fossils, minerals, and the inanimate works of nature, discourse articulately at his command, and act the part which he assigns them. The virtues, vices, and every *property* of beings, receive from him a *local habitation*

tation and a name. In short, he may personify, bestow life, speech, and action, on whatever he thinks proper.

It is easy to imagine what a source of *novelty* and *variety* this must open, to a genius capable of conceiving, and of employing, these ideal persons in a proper manner: what an opportunity it affords him to diversify his images, and to treat the fancy with change of *objects*, while he strengthens the understanding, or regulates the passions, by a succession of *Truths*. To raise beings like these into a state of action and intelligence, gives the Fabulist an undoubted claim to the *first* character of the poet, a *Creator*. I rank him not, as I said before, with the writers of epic or dramatic poems; but the maker of pins or needles is as much an artist, as an anchor-smith: and a painter in miniature may shew as much skill, as he who paints in the largest proportions.

When these persons are once raised, we must carefully enjoin them proper tasks; and assign them sentiments and language suitable to their several natures, and respective properties.

A raven should not be extolled for her voice, nor a bear be represented with an elegant shape. 'Twere a very obvious instance of absurdity, to paint an hare, cruel; or a wolf, compassionate. An ass were but ill qualified to be General of an army,

army, though he may well enough serve perhaps for one of the trumpeters. But so long as popular opinion allows to the lion, magnanimity; rage, to the tiger; strength, to the mule; cunning, to the fox; and buffoonery, to the monkey; why may they not support the characters of an Agamemnon, Achilles, Ajax, Ulysses, and Thersites? The truth is, when Moral actions are with judgment attributed to the brute creation, we scarce *perceive* that nature is at all violated by the Fabulist. He appears, at *most*, to have only translated their language. His lions, wolves, and foxes, *behave* and *argue* as those creatures *would*, had they originally been endowed with the human faculties of speech and reason.

But greater art is yet required, whenever we personify *inanimate* beings. Here the copy so far deviates from the great lines of nature, that without the nicest care, reason will revolt against the fiction. However, beings of *this* sort, managed ingeniously, and with address, recommend the Fabulist's invention by the grace of novelty and of variety. Indeed the analogy between things natural and artificial, animate and inanimate, is often so very striking, that we can, with seeming propriety, give passions and sentiments to every individual part of existence. Appearance favours the deception. The vine may be *enamoured* of the elm; her embraces testify her passion. The swelling mountain may, naturally
enough,

enough, be *delivered* of a mouse. The gourd may reproach the pine, and the sky-rocket insult the stars. The axe may solicit a new handle of the forest; and the moon, in her *female* character, request a fashionable garment. Here is nothing incongruous; nothing that shocks the reader with impropriety. On the other hand, were the axe to desire a fine perriwig, and the moon petition for a new pair of boots; probability would *then* be violated, and the absurdity become too glaring.

S E C T. IV.

On the Language of Fable.

THE most beautiful Fables that ever were invented, may be disfigured by the *Language* in which they are clothed. Of this, poor Esop, in some of his English dresses, affords a melancholy proof. The ordinary stile of Fable should be *familiar*, but it should also be *elegant*. Were I to instance any style that I should prefer on this occasion, it should be that of Mr. *Addison's* little tales in the Spectator. That ease and simplicity, that conciseness and propriety, that subdued and decent humour he so remarkably discovers in those compositions; seem to have qualified him for a Fabulist, almost beyond any other writer. But to return:

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The *Familiar*, says Mr. La Motte, to whose ingenious *Essay* I have often been obliged in this discourse, is the general tone, or accent of Fable. It was thought sufficient, on its first appearance, to lend the animals our most common language. Nor indeed have they any extraordinary *pretensions* to the sublime; it being requisite they should *speak* with the same simplicity that they *behave*.

The *Familiar* also is more proper for insinuation, than the *Elevated*; this being the language of *reflection*, as the former is the voice of *sentiment*. We guard ourselves against the one, but lie open to the other; and instruction will always the most effectually sway us, when it appears least jealous of its rights and privileges.

The *Familiar* style however that is here required, notwithstanding that appearance of *Ease* which is its character, is perhaps more difficult to write, than the *elevated* or *sublime*. A writer more readily perceives when he has risen above the common language; than he perceives, in speaking this language, whether he has made the choice that is most suitable to the occasion: and it is nevertheless, upon *this happy choice* that all the charm of the *familiar* depends. Moreover, the *elevated* style deceives and seduces, although it *be not* the best chosen; whereas the *familiar* can procure itself no sort of respect, if it be not easy, natural, just, delicate, and unaffected. A
Fabulist

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Fabulist must therefore bestow great attention upon his style; and even labour it so much the *more*, that it may appear to have cost him no pains at all.

The authority of *Fontaine* justifies this opinion in regard to style. His fables are perhaps the best examples of the *genteel familiar*, as Sir Roger L'Esrange affords the grossest, of the *indelicate* and *low*. When we read that "while the frog and the mouse were disputing it at sword's point, down comes a kite *powdering* upon them in the *interim*, and *gobbets* up both together to part the fray." And where the fox reproaches "a bevy of jolly gossiping wenches making merrry over a *dish of pullets*, that, if *he* but peeped into a hen-roost, they always made a bawling with *their dogs* and *their bastards*; while you yourselves, says he, can lie *stuffing your guts* with your hens and your capons, and not a *word of the pudding*." This may be *familiar*, but is also *coarse* and *vulgar*; and cannot fail to disgust a reader that has the least degree of taste or delicacy.

The style of Fable then must be simple and familiar; and it must *likewise* be correct and elegant. By the former, I would advise that it should not be loaded with figure and metaphor; that the disposition of words be natural; the turn of sentences, easy; and their construction, unembarrassed. By elegance, I would
exclude

exclude all coarse and provincial terms; all affected and puerile conceits; all obsolete and pedantic phrases. To this I would adjoin, as the word perhaps implies, a certain finishing polish, which gives a grace and spirit to the whole; and which, though it have always the appearance of nature, is almost ever the effect of art.

But, notwithstanding all that has been said, there are some occasions on which it is allowable, and even expedient to change the style. The language of a Fable must rise or fall in conformity to the subject. A *Lion*, when introduced in his regal capacity, must hold discourse in a strain somewhat more elevated than a *Country Mouse*. The lioness then becomes his *Queen*, and the beasts of the forest are called his *Subjects*: a method that offers at once to the imagination, both the *animal* and the *person* he is designed to represent. Again, the buffoon-monkey should avoid that pomp of phrase, which the Owl employs as her best pretence to wisdom. Unless the style be thus judiciously varied, it will be impossible to preserve a just distinction of character.

Descriptions, at once concise and pertinent, add a grace to Fable; but are then most happy, when included in the action: whereof the Fable of *Boreas and the Sun* affords us an example. An epithet well chosen is often a description in itself;
and

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and so much the more agreeable, as it the less retards us in our pursuit of the catastrophe.

I might enlarge much further on the subject, but perhaps I may appear to have been too diffuse already. Let it suffice to hint, that little *strokes of humour*, when arising naturally from the subject; and *incidental reflections*, when kept in due subordination to the principal, add a value to these compositions. These latter, however, should be employed very sparingly, and with great address; be very few and very short: It is scarcely enough that they naturally result from the subject: they should be such as may appear *necessary* and *essential* parts of the Fable. And when these embellishments, pleasing in *themselves*, tend to illustrate the *main action*, they then afford that nameless grace remarkable in Fontaine and some few others; and which persons of the best discernment will more easily *conceive*, than they can explain.

FABLES.

F A B L E S.

B O O K I.

From the A N C I E N T S.

D

To face the first Book



1 *The Trees and
the Bramble.*



2 *The Frogs
desire a King.*



3 *The Wolf
and Shepherds.*



4 *The Belly
and Limbs.*



5 *The Fox
and Swallow.*



6 *The Fox
and Crow.*



7 *The Fox
and Stork.*



8 *Dan with
borrow'd Feathers.*



9 *The Wolf
and Lamb.*



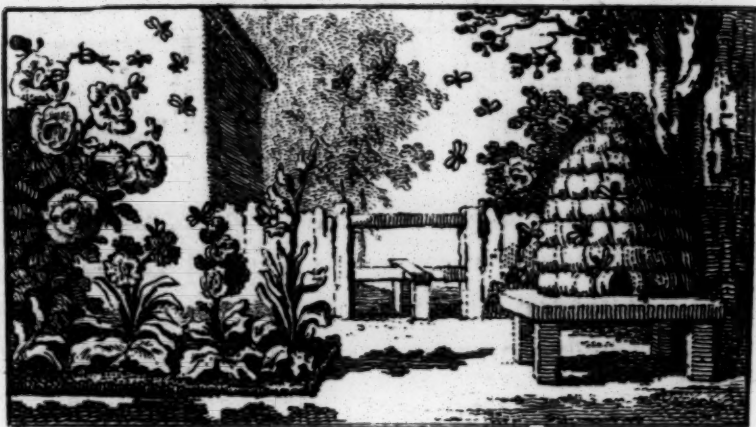
10 *Mountain
in labour.*



11 *The Boys
and Frogs.*



12 *Hawk and
her Young.*



F A B L E I.

The Trees and the Bramble.

THE Israelites, ever murmuring and discontented under the reign of Jehovah, were desirous of having a king, like the rest of the nations. They offered the kingdom to Gideon their deliverer ; to him, and to his posterity after him : he generously refused their offer, and reminded them, that Jehovah was their king. When Gideon was dead, Abimelech, his son by a concubine, slew all his other sons to the number of seventy, Jotham alone escaping ; and by the assistance

4 ANCIENT FABLES.

of the Shechemites made himself king. Jotham, to represent to them their folly, and to shew them, that the most deserving are generally the least ambitious, whereas the worthless grasp at power with eagerness, and exercise it with insolence and tyranny, spake to them in the following manner :

Hearken unto *me*, ye men of Shechem, so may God hearken unto *you*. The trees, grown weary of the state of freedom and equality in which God had placed them, met together to choose and to anoint a king over them : and they said to the Olive-tree, Reign thou over us. But the Olive-tree said unto them, Shall I quit my fatness wherewith God and man is honoured, to disquiet myself with the cares of government, and to rule over the trees ? And they said unto the Fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the Fig-tree said unto them, Shall I bid adieu to my sweetness and my pleasant fruit ; to take upon me the painful charge of royalty, and to be set over the trees ? Then said the trees unto the Vine, Come thou, and reign over us. But the Vine said also unto them, Shall I leave my wine, which honoureth God and cheereth

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cheereth man, to bring upon myself nothing but trouble and anxiety, and to become king of the trees? we are happy in our present lot: seek some other to reign over you, Then said all the trees unto the Bramble, Come thou and reign over us. And the Bramble said unto them, I will be your king; come ye all under my shadow, and be safe; obey me, and I will grant you my protection. But if you obey me not, out of the Bramble shall come forth a fire, which shall devour even the cedars of Lebanon.

F A B L E II.

The Frogs petitioning Jupiter for a King.

AS Esop was travelling over Greece, he happened to pass thro' Athens just after Pisistratus had abolished the popular state, and usurped a sovereign power; when perceiving that the Athenians bore the yoke, tho' mild and easy, with much impatience, he related to them the following fable:

The commonwealth of Frogs, a discontented, variable race, weary of liberty, and fond of change,

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change, petitioned Jupiter to grant them a king. The good-natured deity, in order to indulge this their request, with as little mischief to the petitioners as possible, threw them down a Log. At first they regarded their new monarch with great reverence, and kept from him at a most respectful distance: but perceiving his tame and peaceable disposition, they by degrees ventured to approach him with more familiarity, till at length they conceived for him the utmost contempt. In this disposition, they renewed their request to Jupiter, and intreated him to bestow upon them another king. The Thunderer in his wrath sent them a Crane, who no sooner took possession of his new dominions, than he began to devour his subjects one after another, in a most capricious and tyrannical manner. They were now far more dissatisfied than before; when applying to Jupiter a third time, they were dismissed with this reproof, that the evil they complained of they had imprudently brought upon themselves; and that they had no other remedy now but to submit to it with patience.

FABLE

F A B L E III.

The Belly and the Limbs.

MENENIUS AGRIPPA, a Roman consul, being deputed by the senate to appease a dangerous tumult and sedition of the people, who refused to pay the taxes necessary for carrying on the business of the state; convinced them of their folly, by delivering to them the following fable:

My friends and countrymen, said he, attend to my words. It once happened that the Members of the human body, taking some exception at the conduct of the Belly, resolved no longer to grant him the usual supplies. The Tongue first, in a seditious speech, aggravated their grievances; and after highly extolling the activity and diligence of the Hands and Feet, set forth how hard and unreasonable it was, that the fruits of their labour should be squandered away upon the insatiable cravings of a fat and indolent Paunch, which was entirely useless, and unable to do any thing towards

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helping himself. This speech was received with unanimous applause by all the Members. Immediately the Hands declared they would work no more; the Feet determined to carry no farther the load of guts with which they had hitherto been oppressed; nay, the very Teeth refused to prepare a single morsel more for his use. In this distress, the Belly besought them to consider maturely, and not foment so senseless a rebellion. There is none of you, says he, can be ignorant that whatsoever you bestow upon me, is immediately converted to your use, and dispersed by me for the good of you all into every Limb. But he remonstrated in vain; for during the clamours of passion, the voice of reason is always disregarded. It being therefore impossible for him to quiet the tumult, he starved for want of their assistance, and the body wasted away to a skeleton. The Limbs grown weak and languid, were sensible at last of their error, and would fain have returned to their respective duties; but it was now too late, death had taken possession of the whole, and they all perished together.

FABLE

F A B L E IV.

The Wolf and the Shepherds.

HOW apt are men to condemn in others,
what they practise themselves without
scruple !

A Wolf, says Plutarch, peeping into a hut,
where a company of Shepherds were regaling
themselves with a joint of mutton ; Lord, said
he, what a clamour would these men have raised,
if they had caught *me* at such a banquet !

F A B L E V.

*The Fox and the * Swallow.*

ARISTOTLE informs us that the fol-
lowing fable was spoken by Esop to the
Samians, on a debate upon changing their mi-
nisters, who were accused of plundering the
commonwealth.

* Instead of the Swallow, it was originally a hedge-hog ;
but as that creature seemed very unfit for the business of driv-
ing away flies, 'twas thought more proper to substitute the
swallow.

A Fox swimming across a river, happened to be entangled in some weeds that grew near the bank, from which he was unable to extricate himself. As he lay thus exposed to whole swarms of flies, who were galling him and sucking his blood; a swallow observing his distress, kindly offered to drive them away. By no means, said the Fox; for if these should be chased away, who are already sufficiently gorged, another more hungry swarm would succeed, and I should be robbed of every remaining drop of blood in my veins.

F A B L E VI.

The Fox and the Raven.

A FOX observing a Raven perched on the branch of a tree, with a fine piece of cheese in her mouth, immediately began to consider how he might possess himself of so delicious a morsel. Dear madam, said he, I am extremely glad to have the pleasure of seeing you this morning: your beautiful shape, and shining feathers, are the delight of my eyes; and would you condescend to favour me with
a song,

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a song, I doubt not but your voice is equal to the rest of your accomplishments. Deluded with this flattering speech, the transported Raven opened her mouth, in order to give him a specimen of her pipe, when down dropt the cheese; which the Fox immediately snatching up, bore it away in triumph, leaving the Raven to lament her credulous vanity at her leisure.

F A B L E VII.

The Fox and the Stork.

THE Fox, tho' in general more inclined to roguery than wit, had once a strong inclination to play the wag with his neighbour the Stork. He accordingly invited her to dinner in great form; but when it came upon the table, the Stork found it consisted intirely of different soups, served up in broad shallow dishes, so that she could only dip in the end of her bill, but could not possibly satisfy her hunger. The Fox lapped it up very readily, and every now and then, addressing himself to his guest, desired to know how she liked her entertainment; hoped that every thing was sea-

soned to her mind ; and protested he was very sorry to see her eat so sparingly. The Stork, perceiving she was played upon, took no notice of it, but pretended to like every dish extremely ; and at parting pressed the Fox so earnestly to return her visit, that he could not in civility refuse. The day arrived, and he repaired to his appointment ; but to his great mortification, when dinner appeared, he found it composed of minced meat, served up in long narrow-necked glasses ; so that he was only tantalized with the sight of what it was impossible for him to taste. The Stork thrust in her long bill, and helped herself very plentifully ; then turning to Reynard, who was eagerly licking the outside of a jarr where some sauce had been spilled—I am very glad, said she, smiling, that you seem to have so good an appetite ; I hope you will make as hearty a dinner at my table as I did the other day at yours. Reynard hung down his head, and looked very much displeased.—Nay, nay, said the Stork, don't pretend to be out of humour about the matter ; they that cannot take a jest, should never make one.

FABLE

F A B L E VIII.

The Daw with borrowed Feathers.

WHEN a pert young templer, or city apprentice, sets up for a fine gentleman, with the assistance of an embroidered waistcoat and Dresden ruffles, but without one qualification proper to the character, how frequently does it happen, that he is laughed at by his equals, and despised by those whom he presumed to imitate !

A pragmatical Jackdaw was vain enough to imagine, that he wanted nothing but the coloured plumes, to render him as elegant a bird as the Peacock : puffed up with this wise conceit, he dressed himself with a sufficient quantity of their most beautiful feathers, and in this borrowed garb, forsaking his old companions, endeavoured to pass for a Peacock ; but he no sooner attempted to associate with these genteel creatures, than an affected strut betrayed the vain pretender. The offended Peacocks, plucking from him their degraded
fea-

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feathers, soon stripped him of his finery, reduced him to a mere Jackdaw, and drove him back to his brethren; by whom he was now equally despised, and justly punished with derision and contempt.

F A B L E IX.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

WHEN cruelty and injustice are armed with power, and determined on oppression, the strongest pleas of innocence are preferred in vain.

A Wolf and a Lamb were accidentally quenching their thirst together at the same rivulet. The Wolf stood towards the head of the stream, and the Lamb at some distance below. The injurious beast, resolved on a quarrel, fiercely demands—How dare you disturb the water which I am drinking? The poor Lamb, all trembling, replies, How, I beseech you, can that possibly be the case, since the current sets from you to me? Disconcerted by the force of truth, he changes the accusation:

Six

ANCIENT FABLES. 15

Six months ago, says he, you vilely slandered me. Impossible,* returns the Lamb, for I was not then born. No matter, it was your father then, or some of your relations; and immediately seizing the innocent Lamb, he tore him to pieces.

F A B L E X.

The Mountain in Labour.

ARUMOUR once prevailed, that a neighbouring mountain was in labour; it was affirmed that she had been heard to utter prodigious groans; and a general expectation had been raised, that some extraordinary birth was at hand. Multitudes flocked with much eagerness to be witnesses of the wonderful event: one expecting her to be delivered of a giant; another of some enormous monster; and all were suspended in earnest expectation of somewhat grand and astonishing. When after waiting with great impatience a considerable time, behold! out crept a Mouse.

F A B L E

F A B L E XI.

The Boys and the Frogs.

ON the margin of a large lake, which was inhabited by a great number of Frogs, a company of Boys happened to be at play. Their diversion was duck and drake; and whole vollies of stones were thrown into the water, to the great annoyance and danger of the poor terrified Frogs. At length one of the most hardy, lifting up his head above the surface of the lake; Ah, dear children, said he, why will ye learn so soon the cruel practices of your race? Consider, I beseech you, that tho' this may be *sport* to you, 'tis *death* to us.

F A B L E XII.

The Lark and her Young.

ALARK having built her nest in a field of corn, it grew ripe before her Young were well able to fly. Apprehensive for their safety, she enjoined them, while she went out
in

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in order to provide for their subsistence, to listen very attentively to any discourse they might hear about reaping the field. At her return, they told her, that the farmer and his son had been there, and had agreed to send to some of their neighbours, to assist them in cutting it down the next day. And so they depend, it seems, upon neighbours, said the mother: very well: then I think we have no occasion to be afraid of to-morrow. The next day she went out, and left with them the same injunction as before. When she returned, they acquainted her, that the farmer and his son had again been there, but as none of their neighbours came to their assistance, they had deferred reaping till the next day, and intended to send for help to their friends and relations. I think we may still venture another day, says the mother; but however, be careful, as before, to let me know what passes in my absence. They now inform her, that the farmer and his son had a third time visited the fields; and finding that neither friend nor relation had regarded their summons, they were determined to come the next morning and cut it down themselves. Nay, then, replied the Lark, it is time to think of removing:

ing: for as they now depend only upon themselves for doing their own business, it will undoubtedly be performed.

F A B L E XIII.

The Stag drinking.

A STAG quenching his thirst in a clear lake, was struck with the beauty of his horns, which he saw reflected in the water. At the same time, observing the extreme slenderness of his legs; What a pity it is, said he, that so fine a creature should be furnished with so despicable a set of spindleshanks! what a truly noble animal I should be, were my legs in any degree answerable to my horns! In the midst of this soliloquy, he was alarmed with the cry of a pack of hounds. He immediately flies through the forest, and leaves his pursuers so far behind, that he might probably have escaped; but taking into a thick wood, his horns were entangled in the branches, where he was held till the hounds came up, and tore him in pieces. In his last moments, he thus exclaimed—How ill do we judge of
our



13. The Stag drinking.



14. The Swallow & other Birds.



15. The Dog and the Lap Dog.



16. The Lion and the Mouse.



17. The Wolf and the Crane.



18. Countryman and Snake.



19. The Dog & the Shadow.



20. The Man & the Wind.



21. The Wolf & the Mastiff.



22. Fortune & the Schoolboy.



23. The Frog and the Ox.



24. Lion & other Beasts hunting.

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our true advantages! the legs which I despised would have borne me away in safety, had not my favourite antlers betrayed me to ruin.

F A B L E XIV.

The Swallow and other Birds.

A SWALLOW observing an husbandman employed in sowing hemp, called the little Birds together, and informed them what the farmer was about. He told them that hemp was the material from which the nets, so fatal to the feathered race, were composed; and advised them unanimously to join in picking it up, in order to prevent the consequences. The Birds, either disbelieving his information, or neglecting his advice, gave themselves no trouble about the matter. In a little time the hemp appeared above ground: the friendly Swallow again addressed himself to them, told them it was not yet too late, provided they would immediately set about the work, before the seeds had taken too deep root. But they still rejecting his advice, he forsook their society, repaired for safety to towns and cities, there built his habita-

habitation and kept his residence. One day, as he was skimming along the streets, he happened to see a large parcel of those very Birds, imprisoned in a cage, on the shoulders of a bird-catcher. Unhappy wretches, said he, you now feel the punishment of your former neglect. But those, who, having no foresight of their own, despise the wholesome admonition of their friends, deserve the mischiefs which their own obstinacy or negligence brings upon their heads.

F A B L E XV.

The Ass and the Lap-dog.

AN Ass, who lived in the same house with a favourite Lap-dog, observing the superior degree of affection, which the little minion enjoyed, imagined he had nothing more to do, in order to obtain an equal share in the good graces of the family, than to imitate the Lap-dog's playful and endearing caresses. Accordingly, he began to frisk about before his master, kicking up his heels and braying, in an awkward affectation of wantonness and
plea-

pleasantry : this strange behaviour could not fail of raising much laughter, which the Ass mistaking for approbation and encouragement, he proceeded to leap upon his master's breast, and began very familiarly to lick his face ; but he was presently convinced, by the force of a good cudgel, that what is sprightly and agreeable in one, may in another be justly censured as rude and impertinent ; and that the surest way to gain esteem, is for every one to act suitably to his own natural genius and character.

F A B L E XVI.

The Lion and the Mouse.

A LION by accident laid his paw upon a poor innocent Mouse. The frightened little creature imagining she was just going to be devoured, begged hard for her life, urged that clemency was the fairest attribute of power, and earnestly intreated his majesty not to stain his illustrious paws with the blood of so insignificant an animal ; upon which the Lion very generously set her at liberty. It happened a
few

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few days afterwards, that the Lion, ranging for his prey, fell into the toils of the hunter. The Mouse heard his roarings, knew the voice of her benefactor, and immediately repairing to his assistance, gnawed in pieces the meshes of the net, and by delivering her preserver, convinced him that there is no creature so much below another, but may have it in his power to return a good office.

F A B L E X V I I .

The Wolf and the Crane.

A WOLF having with too much greediness swallowed a bone, it unfortunately stuck in his throat; and in the violence of his pain he applied to several animals, earnestly entreating them to extract it. None cared to hazard the dangerous experiment, except the Crane; who, persuaded by his solemn promises of a gratuity, ventured to thrust her enormous length of neck down his throat, and having successfully performed the operation, claimed the recompense. See the unreasonableness of some creatures, said the Wolf: have I not suf-

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suffered thee safely to draw thy neck out of my jaws, and hast thou the conscience to demand a further reward!

F A B L E XVIII.

The Countryman and the Snake.

AN honest countryman observed a Snake lying under a hedge almost frozen to death. He was moved with compassion; and bringing it home, he laid it near the fire, and gave it some new milk. Thus fed and cherished, the creature presently began to revive: but no sooner had he recovered strength enough to do mischief, than he sprung upon the countryman's wife, bit one of his children, and, in short, threw the whole family into confusion and terror. Ungrateful wretch! said the man, thou hast sufficiently taught me how ill-judged it is to confer benefits on the worthless and undeserving. So saying, he snatched up an hatchet, and cut the snake in pieces.

F A B L E

F A B L E XIX.

The Dog and the Shadow.

AN hungry Spaniel, having stolen a piece of flesh from a butcher's shop, was carrying it across a river. The water being clear, and the sun shining brightly, he saw his own image in the stream, and fancied it to be another dog with a more delicious morsel: upon which, unjustly and greedily opening his jaws to snatch at the Shadow, he lost the substance.

F A B L E XX.

The Sun and the Wind.

PHŒBUS and Æolus had once a dispute which of them could soonest prevail with a certain traveller to part with his cloak. Æolus began the attack, and assaulted him with great violence. But the man wrapping his cloak still closer about him, doubled his efforts to keep it, and went on his way. And now, Phœbus darted his warm insinuating rays, which

which melted the traveller by degrees, at length obliged him to throw aside that cloak, which all the rage of Æolus could not compel him to resign. Learn hence, said Phœbus to the blustering god, that soft and gentle means will often accomplish what force and fury can never effect.

F A B L E XXI.

The Wolf and the Mastiff.

A LEAN half-starved Wolf inadvertently strolled in the way of a strong well-fed Mastiff. The Wolf being much too weak to act upon the offensive, thought it most prudent to accost honest Towser in a friendly manner; and among other civilities, very complaisantly congratulated him on his goodly appearance. Why, yes, returned the Mastiff, I am indeed in tolerable case; and if you will follow me, you may soon be altogether in as good a plight. The Wolf pricked up his ears at the proposal, and requested to be informed what he must do to earn such plentiful meals. Very little, replied the Mastiff; only drive away beggars, caress my master, and be civil to his family. To these conditions the hungry

E

Wolf

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Wolf had no objection, and very readily consented to follow his new acquaintance wherever he would conduct him. As they were trotting along, the Wolf observed that the hair was worn in a circle round his friend's neck; which raised his curiosity to enquire what was the occasion of it. Nothing, answered the Mastiff, or a mere trifle; perhaps the collar to which my chain is sometimes fastened. Chain! replied the Wolf, with much surprize; it should seem then that you are not permitted to rove about where and when you please. Not always, returned Towser, hanging down his head; but what does that signify? It signifies so much, rejoined the Wolf, that I am resolved to have no share in your dinners; *half* a meal with liberty, is, in my estimation, preferable to a *full* one without it.

F A B L E XXII.

Fortune and the School-boy.

A SCHOOL-BOY, fatigued with play, threw himself down by the brink of a deep pit, where he fell fast asleep. Fortune happening to pass by, saw him in this dangerous

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rous situation, and kindly gave him a tap on the shoulder: My dear child, said she, if you had fallen into this pit, I should have borne the blame; though in fact, the accident would have been wholly owing to your own carelessness.

Misfortune, said a celebrated cardinal, is but another word for imprudence. The maxim is by no means absolutely true: certain, however, it is, that mankind suffer more evils from their own imprudence, than from events which it is not in their power to controul.

F A B L E XXIII.

The Frog and the Ox.

A FROG being wonderfully struck with the size and majesty of an Ox that was grazing in the marshes, could not forbear endeavouring to expand herself to the same portly magnitude. After puffing and swelling for some time: "What think you, sister," said she, "will this do?" Far from it. "Will this?" By no means. "But this surely will." Nothing like it. In short, after many ridicu-

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lous efforts to the same fruitless purpose, the simple Frog burst her skin, and miserably expired upon the spot.

F A B L E XXIV.

The Lion and other Beasts hunting in Partnership.

A LEOPARD, a Lynx, and a Wolf, were ambitious of the honour of hunting with the Lion. His savage majesty graciously condescended to their desire, and it was agreed that they should all have an equal share in whatever might be taken. They scour the forest, are unanimous in the pursuit; and, after a very fine chase, pull down a noble Stag. It was divided with great dexterity by the Lynx, into four equal parts; but just as he was going to secure his share—Hold, says the Lion, let no one presume to serve himself, till he hath heard our just and reasonable claims. I seize upon the first quarter by virtue of my prerogative; the second I think is due to my superior conduct and courage; I cannot forego the third on account of the necessities of my den; and if any one is inclined to dispute my right to the fourth, let him speak. Awed by the majesty
of



25. Ant and the Fly.



26. Travellers & the Bear.



27. Bull and the Goat.



28. Bees and Wasps.



29. Old Man and Death.



30. Court and Country Manners.



31. Goat and Fox.



32. The Monk and Cranes.



33. Oak and Willow.



34. The Boy and Filberts.



35. Satyr and Traveller.



36. Horse and Stag.

of his frown, and the terror of his paws, they silently withdrew, resolving never to hunt again but with their equals.

F A B L E XXV.

The Ant and the Fly.

AN Ant and a Fly had once a ridiculous contest about precedence, and were arguing which of the two was the more honourable: such disputes most frequently happen amongst the lowest and most worthless creatures. The Fly expressed great resentment, that such a poor, crawling insect should presume to lie basking in the same sunshine, with one so much her superior! Thou hast not surely the insolence, said she, to imagine thyself of an equal rank with *me*. I am none of your mechanic creatures who live by their industry; but enjoy in plenty, and without labour, every thing that is truly delicious. I place myself, uncontrouled upon the heads of kings; I kiss with freedom the lips of beauties; and feast upon the choicest sacrifices that are offered to the gods. To eat with the gods, replied the Ant, and to enjoy the favours of the fair and

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the powerful, would be great honour indeed to one who was an invited or a welcome guest; but an impertinent intruder, who is driven out with aversion and contempt wherever he appears, has not much cause methinks to boast of his privileges. And as to the honour of not labouring for your subsistence; here too your boast is only your disgrace; for hence it is, that one half of the year you are destitute even of the common necessities of life; whilst I, at the same time, retiring to the hoarded granaries which my honest industry has filled, enjoy every satisfaction, independent of the favour either of beauties or of kings.

F A B L E XXVI.

The Bear and the two Friends

TWO Friends, setting out together upon a journey which led thro' a dangerous forest, mutually promised to assist each other, if they should happen to be assaulted. They had not proceeded far, before they perceived a Bear making towards them with great rage. There were no hopes in flight: but one of them, being very active, sprung up into a tree; upon which

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which the other, throwing himself flat on the ground, held his breath, and pretended to be dead; remembering to have heard it asserted, that this creature will not prey upon a dead carcase. The Bear came up, and after smelling to him some time, left him, and went on. When he was fairly out of sight and hearing, the hero from the tree calls out—Well, my friend, what said the Bear? He seemed to whisper you very closely. He did so, replied the other, and gave me this good piece of advice; never to associate with a wretch, who in the hour of danger will desert his friend.

F A B L E XXVII.

The Bull and the Gnat.

A CONCEITED Gnat, fully persuaded of his own importance, having placed himself on the horn of a Bull, expressed great uneasiness lest his weight should be incommo-
dious; and with much ceremony begg'd the Bull's pardon for the liberty he had taken; assuring him that he would immediately remove, if he pressed too hard upon him. Give yourself no uneasiness on that account, replied

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the Bull, I beseech you: for as I never perceived when you sate down, I shall probably not miss you whenever you think fit to rise up.

F A B L E XXVIII.

The Wasps and the Bees.

PRETENDERS of every kind are best detected by appealing to their works.

Some honey-combs being claimed by a swarm of Wasps, the right owners protested against their demand, and the cause was referred to a Hornet. Witnesses being examined, they deposed that certain winged creatures, who had a loud hum, were of a yellowish colour, and somewhat like Bees, were observed a considerable time hovering about the place where this nest was found. But this did not sufficiently decide the question; for these characteristics, the Hornet observed, agreed no less with the Bees than with the Wasps. At length a sensible old Bee offered to put the matter upon this decisive issue: Let a place be appointed by the court, said he, for the plaintiffs and defendants to work in: it will then
soon

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soon appear which of us are capable of forming such regular cells, and afterwards of filling them with so delicious a fluid. The Wasps, refusing to agree to this proposal, sufficiently convinced the judge on which side the right lay; and he decreed the honey-combs accordingly.

F A B L E XXIX.

The Old Man and Death.

A FEEBLE Old man, quite spent with carrying a burthen of sticks which with much labour he had gathered in a neighbouring wood, called upon Death to release him from the fatigues he endured. Death hearing the invocation, was immediately at his elbow, and asked him what he wanted. Frighted and trembling at the unexpected appearance;—O good sir! said he, my burthen had like to have slipt from me, and being unable to recover it myself, I only implored your assistance to replace it on my shoulders.

F A B L E XXX.

The Court and Country-Mouse.

ACONTENTED Country-mouse had once the honour to receive a visit from an old acquaintance belonging to the court. The Country-mouse, extremely glad to see her guest, very hospitably set before her the best cheese and bacon which her cottage afforded; and as to their beverage, it was the purest water from the spring. The repast was homely indeed, but the welcome hearty: they sat and chatted away the evening together very agreeably, and then retired in peace and quietness each to her little cell. The next morning when the guest was to take her leave, she kindly pressed her country friend to accompany her; setting forth in very pompous terms, the great elegance and plenty in which she lived at court. The Country-mouse was easily prevailed upon, and they set out together. It was late in the evening when they arrived at the palace; however, in one of the rooms, they found the remains of a sumptuous entertainment. There were creams and jellies, and sweet-

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sweetmeats; and every thing, in short, of the most delicate kind: the cheese was Parmesan, and they wetted their whiskers in exquisite Champaign. But before they had half finished their repast, they were alarmed with the barking and scratching of a lap dog; then the mewing of a cat frightened them almost to death; by and by, a whole train of servants burst into the room, and every thing was swept away in an instant. Ah! my dear friend, said the Country-mouse, as soon as she had recovered courage enough to speak, if your fine living is thus interrupted with fears and dangers, let me return to my plain food, and my peaceful cottage; for what is elegance without ease; or plenty with an aching heart?

F A B L E XXXI.

The Fox and the Goat.

A FOX and a Goat travelling together, in a very sultry day, found themselves exceedingly thirsty; when looking round the country in order to discover a place where they might probably meet with water, they at length descryed a clear spring at the bottom of

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a pit.

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a pit. They both eagerly descended, and having sufficiently allayed their thirst, began to consider how they should get out. Many expedients for that purpose were mutually proposed, and rejected. At last the crafty Fox cried out with great joy, I have a thought just struck into my mind, which I am confident will extricate us out of our difficulty: do you, said he to the Goat, only rear yourself up upon your hinder legs, and rest your fore-feet against the side of the pit. In this posture, I will climb up to your head, from whence I shall be able, with a spring, to reach the top: and when I am once there, you are sensible it will be very easy for me to pull you out by the horns. The simple Goat liked the proposal well; and immediately placed himself as directed: by means of which the Fox, without much difficulty, gained the top. And now, said the Goat, give me the assistance you promised. Thou old fool, replied the Fox, hadst thou but half as much brains as beard, thou wouldst never have believed, that I would hazard my own life to save thine. However, I will leave with thee a piece of advice, which may be of service to thee hereafter, if thou shouldst have the good fortune to make thy escape:

escape: "Never venture into a pit again, before thou hast well considered how to get out of it."

F A B L E XXXII.

The Farmer, the Cranes, and the Stork.

A STORK was unfortunately drawn into company with some Cranes, who were just setting out on a party of pleasure, as they called it, which in truth was to rob the fish-ponds of a neighbouring Farmer. Our simple Stork agreed to make one; and it so happened, that they were all taken in the fact. The Cranes having been old offenders, had very little to say for themselves, and were presently dispatched; but the Stork pleaded hard for his life. He urged that it was his first fault, that he was not naturally addicted to stealing fish, that he was famous for piety to his parents, and, in short, for many other virtues. Your piety and virtue, said the Farmer, may, for aught I know, be exemplary; but your being in company with thieves renders it very suspicious; and you must therefore submit with patience to share the same punishment with your companions.

F A B L E

F A B L E XXXIII.

The Oak and the Willow.

A CONCEITED Willow had once the vanity to challenge his mighty neighbour the Oak, to a trial of strength. It was to be determined by the next storm; and Æolus was addressed by both parties, to exert his most powerful efforts. This was no sooner asked than granted; and a violent hurricane arose: when the pliant Willow, bending from the blast, or shrinking under it, evaded all its force; while the generous Oak, disdaining to give way, opposed its fury, and was torn up by the roots. Immediately the Willow began to exult, and to claim the victory; when thus the fallen Oak interrupted his exultation, callest thou this a trial of strength? Poor wretch! not to thy strength, but weakness; not to thy boldly facing danger, but meanly skulking from it, thou owest thy present safety. I am an Oak, though fallen; thou still a Willow, though unhurt: but who, except so mean a wretch as thyself, would prefer an ignominious life, preserved by craft or cowardice,

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dice, to the glory of meeting death in an honourable cause.

F A B L E XXXIV.

The Boy and the Filberts.

A CERTAIN Boy, as Epictetus tells the fable, put his hand into a pitcher, where great plenty of figs and filberts were deposited; he grasped as many as his fist could possibly hold, but when he endeavoured to pull it out, the narrowness of the neck prevented him. Unwilling to lose any of them, but unable to draw out his hand, he burst into tears, and bitterly bemoaned his hard fortune. An honest fellow who stood by, gave him this wise and seasonable advice;—Grasp only half the quantity, my Boy, and you will easily succeed.

F A B L E XXXV.

The Satyr and the Traveller.

A POOR man travelling in the depth of winter, through a dreary forest, no inn
to

to receive him, no human creature to befriend or comfort him, was in danger of being starved to death. At last however he came to the cave of a Satyr, where he intreated leave to rest a while, and shelter himself from the inclemency of the weather. The Satyr very civilly complied with his request. The man had no soon entered, than he began to blow his fingers. His host, surpris'd at the novelty of the action, was curious to know the meaning of it. I do it, said the Traveller, to warm my frozen joints; which are benumbed with cold. Presently afterwards, the Satyr, having prepared a mess of hot gruel to refresh his guest, the man found it necessary to blow his pottage too. What, inquired the Satyr, is not your gruel hot enough? Yes, replied the Traveller, too hot; and I blow it to make it cooler. Do you so? quoth the Satyr, then get out of my cave as fast as you can; for I desire to have no communication with a creature that blows hot and cold with the same breath.

ANCIENT FABLES.

FABLE XXXVI.

The Horse and the Stag.

BEFORE the use of Horses was known in the world, one of those noble animals, having been insulted by a Stag, and finding himself unequal to his adversary, applied to a man for assistance. The request was easily granted, and the man putting a bridle in his mouth, and mounting upon his back, soon came up with the Stag, and laid him dead at his enemy's feet. The Horse having thus gratified his revenge, thanked his auxiliary: And now will I return in triumph, said he, and reign the undisputed lord of the forest. By no means, replied the man; I shall have occasion for your services, and you must go home with me. So saying, he led him to his hovel, where the unhappy Steed spent the remainder of his days in a laborious servitude; sensible too late, that how pleasing soever revenge may appear, it always costs more to a generous mind than the purchase is worth.

FABLE

4- ANCIENT FABLES.

F A B L E XXXVII.

The Farmer and his Sons.

A WEALTHY old Farmer, who had for some time declined in his health, perceiving that he had not many days to live, called his sons together to his bedside. My dear children, said the dying man, I leave it with you as my last injunction, not to part with the farm which has been in our family these hundred years: for, to disclose to you a secret which I received from my father, and which I now think proper to communicate to you, there is a treasure hid somewhere in the grounds; though I never could discover the particular spot where it lies concealed. However, as soon as the harvest is got in, spare no pains in the search, and I am well assured you will not lose your labour. The wise old man was no sooner laid in his grave, and the time he mentioned arrived, than his sons went to work, and with great vigour and alacrity turned up again and again every foot of ground belonging to their farm; the consequence of which was, although they did not find the
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ANCIENT FABLES. 43

object of their pursuit, that their lands yielded a far more plentiful crop than those of their neighbours. At the end of the year, when they were settling their accounts, and computing their extraordinary profits, I would venture a wager, said one of the brothers more acute than the rest, that this was the concealed wealth my father meant. I am sure at least, we have found by experience, that “Industry is itself a treasure.”

F A B L E XXXVIII.

The Lion and the Gnat.

AVAUNT! thou paltry, contemptible insect! said a proud Lion one day to a Gnat that was frisking about in the air near his den. The Gnat, enraged at this unprovoked insult, vowed revenge, and immediately darted into the lion's ear. After having sufficiently teized him in that quarter, she quitted her station and retired under his belly; and from thence made her last and most formidable attack in his nostrils, where stinging him almost to madness, the Lion at length fell down, utterly spent with rage, vexation, and

This fable instructs us, never to suffer success so far to transport us, as to throw us off our guard against a reverse of fortune.

The Miser and his Treasure.

A MISE R having scraped together a considerable sum of money, by denying himself the common conveniencies of life, was much embarrassed where to lodge it most securely. After many perplexing debates with himself, he at length fixed upon a corner in a retired field, where he deposited his treasure, and with it his heart, in a hole which he dug for that purpose. His mind was now for a moment at ease; but he had not proceeded many

paces in his way home, when all his anxiety returned; and he could not forbear going back to see that every thing was safe. This he repeated again and again! till he was at last observed by a labourer who was mending a hedge in an adjacent meadow. The fellow concluding that something extraordinary must be the occasion of the frequent visits, marked the spot; and coming in the night in order to examine it, he discovered the prize, and bore it off unmolested. Early the next morning, the Miser again renewed his visit; when finding his Treasure gone, he broke out into the most bitter exclamations. A Traveller, who happened to be passing by at the same time, was moved by his complaints to enquire into the cause of them. Alas! replied the Miser, I have sustained the most cruel and irreparable loss! some villain has robbed me of a sum of money, which I buried under this stone no longer ago than yesterday. Buried! returned the traveller with surprize; a very extraordinary method truly of disposing of your riches! Why did you not rather keep them in your house, that they might be ready for your daily occasions? Daily occasions! resumed the Miser, with an air of much indignation;

nation; do you imagine I so little know the value of money, as to suffer it to be run away with by occasions? on the contrary, I had prudently resolved not to touch a single shilling of it. If that was your wise resolution, answered the traveller, I see no sort of reason for your being thus afflicted; it is but putting this stone in the place of your Treasure, and it will answer all your purposes full as well.

F A B L E XL.

Minerva's Olive.

THE gods, say the heathen mythologists, have each of them their favourite tree. Jupiter preferred the oak, Venus the myrtle, and Phœbus the laurel; Cybele the pine, and Hercules the poplar. Minerva, surprized that they should choose barren trees, asked Jupiter the reason.—It is, said he, to prevent any suspicion that we confer the honour we do them, from an interested motive. Let folly suspect what it pleases, returned Minerva; I shall not scruple to acknowledge, that I make choice of the Olive for the usefulness of its fruit. O daughter, replied the father of the gods,

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gods, it is with justice that men esteem thee wise; for nothing is truly valuable that is not useful.

F A B L E XLI.

The Mimick and the Countryman.

MEN often judge wrong from some foolish prejudice; and whilst they persist in the defence of their mistakes, are sometimes brought to shame by incontestible evidence.

A certain wealthy patrician, intending to treat the Roman people with some theatrical entertainments, published a reward to any one who could furnish out a new or uncommon diversion. Excited by emulation, the artists assembled from all parts; among whom, a mimick, well known for his arch wit, gave out that he had a kind of entertainment that had never yet been produced upon any stage.

This report being spread about, brought the whole city together. The theatre could hardly contain the number of spectators. And when the artist appeared alone upon the stage,
without

without any apparatus, without any prompter or assistant, curiosity and suspense kept the spectators in a profound silence.

On a sudden the performer thrust down his head into his bosom, and mimicked the squeaking of a young pig so naturally, that the audience insisted upon it, he had one under his cloak, and ordered him to be searched. Which being done, and nothing appearing, they loaded the man with encomiums, and honoured him with the most extravagant applause.

A country fellow observing what past——
“Faith, says he, I can do this better than he:” and immediately gave out that he would perform the same much better the next day. Accordingly, greater crowds assembled: prepossessed, however, in favour of the first Artist, they sit prepared to laugh at the Clown, rather than to judge fairly of his performance.

They both came out upon the stage. The Mimick grunts away first, is received with vast applause, and the loudest acclamations. Then the Countryman, pretending that he concealed
a little

ANCIENT FABLES. 49

a little pig under his clothes, (which in fact he did) pinched the ear of the animal, till he made him squeak. The people exclaimed aloud that the first performer had imitated the pig much more naturally, and would have hissed the Countryman off the stage: but he produced the real pig from his bosom, and convincing them by a visible proof of their ridiculous error; See, gentlemen, says he, *What pretty sort of judges you are!*

F A B L E XLII.

The Dog and the Crocodile.

WE can never be too carefully guarded against a connection with persons of an ill character.

As a dog was courting the banks of the Nile, he grew thirsty; but, fearing to be seized by the monsters of that river, he would not stop to satiate his drought, but lapped as he ran. A Crocodile raising his head above the surface of the water, asked him, why he was in such a hurry? he had often, he said, wished for his acquaintance, and should be glad to

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embrace the present opportunity. You do me great honour, returned the Dog, but it is to avoid such companions as you that I am in so much haste.

F A B L E XLIII.

The Wolf in Disguise.

DESIGNING hypocrites frequently lay themselves open to discovery, by over-acting their parts.

A Wolf, who by frequent visits to a flock of sheep in his neighbourhood, began to be extremely well known to them, thought it expedient, for the more successfully carrying on his depredations, to appear in a new character. To this end he disguised himself in a shepherd's habit; and resting his fore-feet upon a stick, which served him by way of crook, he softly made his approaches towards the fold. It happened that the shepherd and his dog were both of them extended on the grass, fast asleep; so that he would certainly have succeeded in his project, if he had not imprudently attempted to imitate the shepherd's voice.

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voice. The horrid noise awakened them both: when the Wolf encumbered with his disguise, and finding it impossible either to resist or to flee, yielded up his life an easy prey to the shepherd's dog.

F A B L E XLIV.

The Bee and the Spider.

THE Bee and the Spider once entered into a warm debate which was the better artist. The Spider urged her skill in the mathematics, and asserted that no one was half so well acquainted as herself with the construction of lines, angles, squares, and circles: that the web she daily wove was a specimen of art inimitable by any other creature in the universe: and besides, that her works were derived from herself alone, the product of her own bowels; whereas the boasted honey of the Bee was stolen from every herb and flower of the field; nay, that she had obligations even to the meanest weeds. To this the Bee replied, that she was in hopes the art of extracting honey from the meanest weeds would at least have been allowed her as an excellence;

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cellence; and that as to her stealing sweets from the herbs and flowers of the field, her skill was there so conspicuous, that no flower ever suffered the least diminution of its fragrance from so delicate an operation. Then, as to the Spider's vaunted knowledge in the construction of lines and angles, she believed she might safely rest the merits of her cause on the regularity alone of her combs; but since she could add to this, the sweetness and excellence of her honey, and the various purposes to which her wax was employed, she had nothing to fear from the comparison of her skill with that of the weaver of a flimsy cobweb; for the value of every art, she observed, is chiefly to be estimated by its use.

F A B L E XLV.

The Ass and his Master.

A DILIGENT Ass, daily loaded beyond his strength by a severe Master whom he had long served, and who kept him at very short commons, happened one day in his old age, to be oppressed with a more than ordinary burthen of earthen-ware. His strength
being

ANCIENT FABLES. 53

being much impaired, and the road deep and uneven, he unfortunately made a trip, and, unable to recover himself, fell down and broke all the vessels to pieces. His Master, transported with rage, began to beat him most unmercifully. Against whom the poor Ass, lifting up his head as he lay on the ground, thus strongly remonstrated: Unfeeling wretch! to thy own avaritious cruelty, in first pinching me of food, and then loading me beyond my strength, thou owest the misfortune which thou so unjustly imputeest to me.

F A B L E XLVI.

The Cock and the Fox.

AN experienced old Cock was settling himself to roost upon a high bough, when a Fox appeared under the tree. I am come, said the artful hypocrite, to acquaint you in the name of all my brethren, that a general peace is concluded between your whole family and ours. Descend immediately I beseech you, that we may mutually embrace upon so joyful and unexpected an event. My good friend, replied the Cock, nothing could be more agreeable to

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me than this news: and to hear it from you increases my satisfaction. But I perceive two hounds at a distance coming this way, who are probably dispatched as couriers with the treaty: as they run very swiftly, and will certainly be here in a few minutes, I will wait their arrival, that we may all four embrace together. Reynard well knew, if that was the case, it was no time for him to remain there any longer: pretending therefore to be in great haste; Adieu, said he, for the present; we will reserve our rejoicings to another opportunity: upon which he darted into the woods with all imaginable expedition. Old Chanticleer no sooner saw him depart, than he crowed abundantly in the triumph of his artifice: for by a harmless stratagem to disappoint the malevolent intentions of those who are endeavouring to deceive us to our ruin, is not only innocent but laudable.

F A B L E XLVII.

The Eagle and the Crow.

TO mistake our own talents, or over-rate our abilities, is always ridiculous, and sometimes dangerous.

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An Eagle, from the top of a high mountain, making a stoop at a lamb, pounced it, and bore it away to her young. A Crow, who had built her nest in a cedar near the foot of the rock, observing what passed, was ambitious of performing the same exploit; and darting from her nest, fixed her talons in the fleece of another lamb. But neither able to move her prey, nor to disentangle her feet, she was taken by the shepherd, and carried away for his children to play with; who eagerly enquiring what bird it was,—An hour ago, said he, she fancied herself an Eagle; however, I suppose she is by this time convinced that she is but a Crow.

F A B L E XLVIII.

The Farmer and the Stag.

A STAG, who had left at some distance a pack of hounds, came up to a Farmer, and desired he would suffer him to hide himself in a little coppice which joined to his house. The Farmer, on condition that he would forbear to enter a field of wheat, which lay before him, and was now ready for the

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fickle,

56 ANCIENT FABLES.

fickle, immediately gave him leave, and promised not to betray him. The squire with his train instantly appeared, and enquiring whether he had not seen the Stag; No, said the Farmer, he has not passed this way, I assure you: but, in order to curry favour at the same time with his worship, he pointed slyly with his finger to the place where the poor beast lay concealed. This however, the sportsman, intent on his game, did not observe, but passed on with his dogs across the very field. As soon as the Stag perceived they were gone, he prepared to steal off, without speaking a word. Methinks, cried the Farmer, you might thank me, at least, for the refuge I have afforded you: Yes, said the Stag, and had your hands been as honest as your tongue, I certainly should; but all the return that a double-dealer has to expect, is a just indignation and contempt.

F A B L E XLIX.

The Lion, the Tyger, and the Fox.

ALION and a Tyger jointly seized on a young fawn, which they immediately killed. This they had no sooner performed,
than

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49 Lion & Unicorn.



50 Lion and Unicorn.



51 Snake & Mithras.



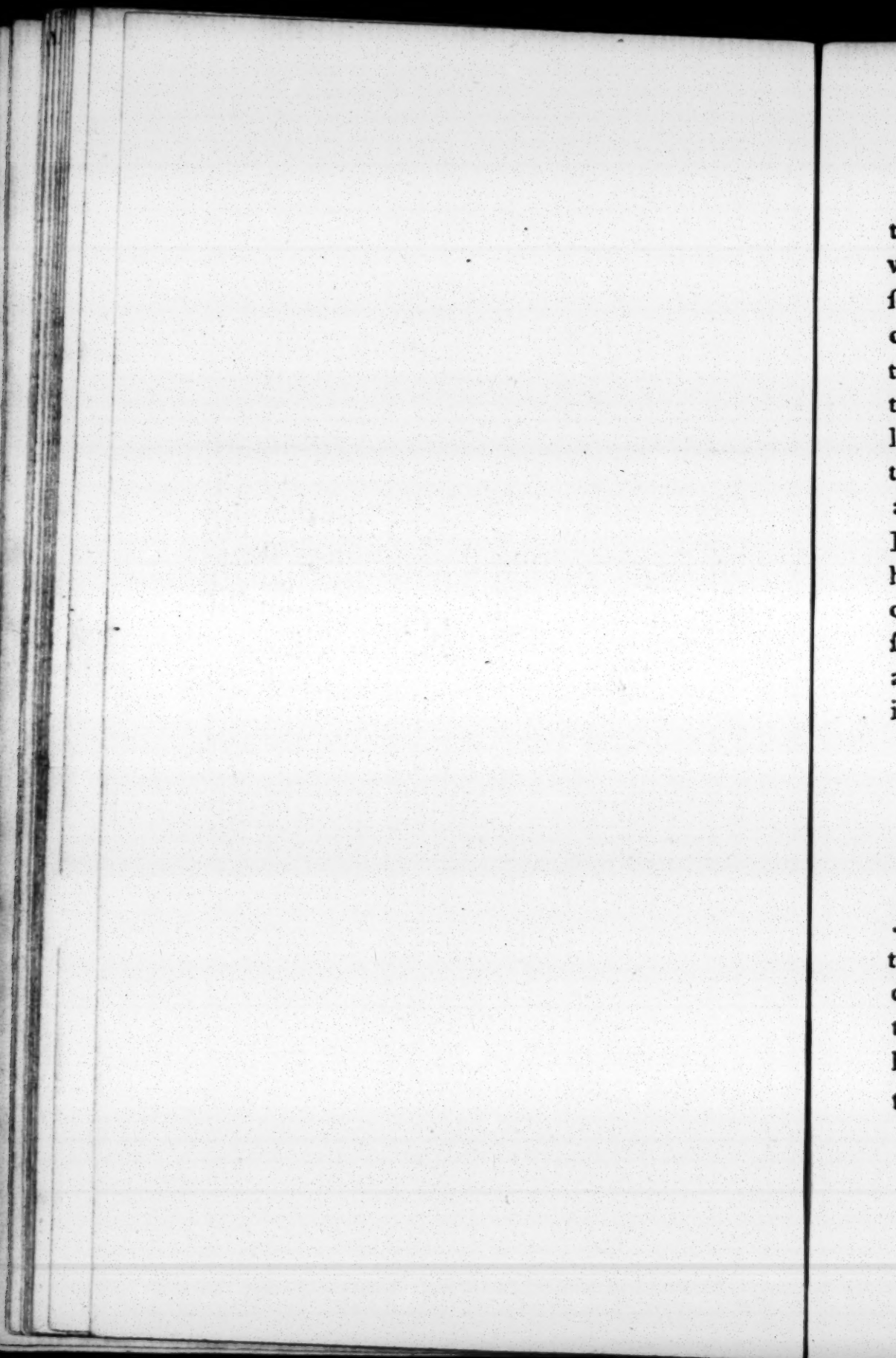
52 Trumpeter taken prisoner.



53 Vice and Fortune.



54 Bear and Beaver.



ANCIENT FABLES. 57

than they fell a fighting, in order to decide whose property it should be. The battle was so bloody, and so obstinate, that they were both compelled, thro' weariness and loss of blood, to desist; and lay down by mutual consent, totally disabled. At this instant, a Fox unluckily came by; who, perceiving their situation, made bold to seize the contested prey, and bore it off unmolested. As soon as the Lion could recover breath—How foolish, said he, has been our conduct! Instead of being contented as we ought, with our respective shares; our senseless rage has rendered us unable to prevent this rascally Fox from defrauding us of the whole.

F A B L E L.

The Lion and the Ass.

A CONCEITED Ass had once the impertinence to bray forth some contemptuous speeches against the Lion. The suddenness of the insult, at first raised some emotions of wrath in his breast; but turning his head and perceiving from whence it came, they immediately subsided; and he very sedately

ly walked on, without deigning to honour the contemptible creature even so much as with an angry word.

F A B L E L I.

The Snake and the Hedge-hog.

IT is by no means prudent to join interests with such as have it in their power to impose upon us their own conditions.

By the intreaties of a Hedge-hog half starved with cold, a Snake was once persuaded to receive him into her cell. He was no sooner entered than his prickles began to be very uneasy to his companion: upon which, the Snake desired he would provide himself another lodging, as she found upon trial, the apartment was not large enough to accommodate both. Nay, said the Hedge-hog, let them that are uneasy in their situation exchange it; for my own part, I am very well contented where I am: if you are not, you are welcome to remove whenever you think proper.

F A B L E

F A B L E LII.

The Trumpeter.

A TRUMPETER in a certain army happened to be taken prisoner. He was ordered immediately to execution, but pleaded in excuse for himself, that it was unjust a person should suffer death, who far from an intention of mischief, did not even wear an offensive weapon. So much the rather, replied one of the enemy, shalt thou die; since without any design of fighting thyself, thou excitest others to the bloody business: for he that is the abetter of a bad action, is at least equally guilty with him that commits it.

F A B L E LIII.

** Vice and Fortune.*

FORTUNE and Vice, according to Plutarch, had once a violent contest, which of

* This Fable is abridged from Plutarch, by Lord Bolingbroke, in his Philosophical Tracts.

60 ANCIENT FABLES.

them had it most in their power to make mankind unhappy. Fortune boasted that she could take from men every external good, and bring upon them every external evil. Be it so, replied Vice; but this is by no means sufficient to make them miserable without my assistance: whereas without yours, I am able to render them completely so; nay, in spite too of all your endeavours to make them happy.

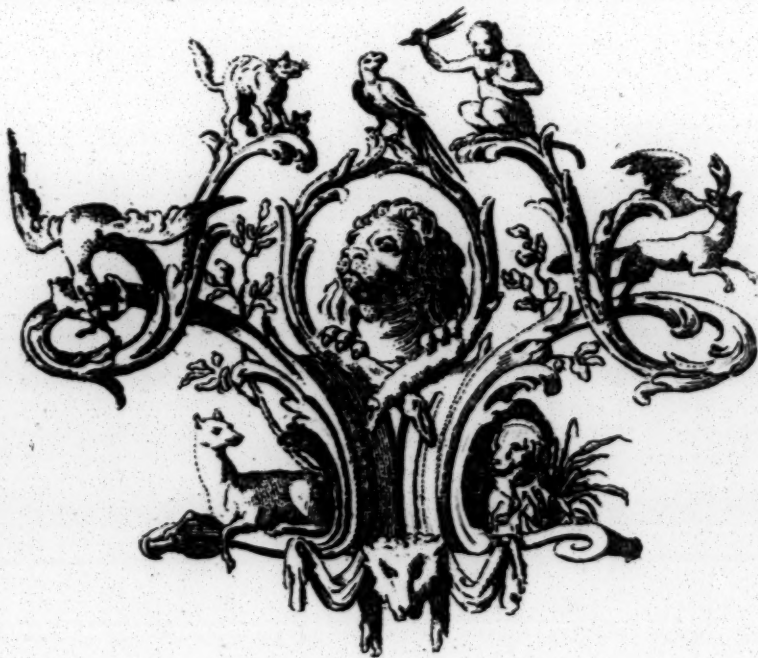
F A B L E LIV.

The Bear and the Bees.

A BEAR happened to be stung by a Bee, and the pain was so acute, that in the madness of revenge he ran into the garden and overturned the hive. This outrage provoked their anger to a high degree, and brought the fury of the whole swarm upon him. They attacked him with such violence, that his life was in danger, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he made his escape, wounded from head to tail. In this desperate condition, lamenting his misfortunes, and licking his sores,
he

ANCIENT FABLES. 61

he could not forbear reflecting how much more
advifable it had been to have patiently ac-
quiefced under one injury, than thus by an
unprofitable resentment to have provoked a
thoufand.



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F A B L E S.

B O O K II.

From the MODERNS.



1 The Miller, his Son, & their Ass



2 The Sorceress.



3 The Camelion.



4 The Wolf & the Lamb.



5 The Fox & Bramble.



6 The Falcon and Hen.



7 The Travellers & Money bag.



8 The Discontented Asses.



9 The two Springs.



10 Rose and Butterfly.



11 The Tortoise & two Ducks.



12 The Cat and old Rat.



F A B L E I.

The Miller, his Son, and their Afs.

A MILLER and his Son were driving their Afs to market, in order to sell him: and that he might get thither fresh and in good condition, they drove him on gently before them. They had not proceeded far, when they met a company of travellers. Sure, says they, you are mighty careful of your Afs: methinks one of you might as well get up and ride, as suffer him to walk on at his ease, while you trudge after on foot. In compliance with this advice, the Old man set his Son upon the beast. And now, they

66 MODERN FABLES.

they had scarce advanced a quarter of a mile further, before they met another company. You idle young rogue, said one of the party, why don't you get down, and let your poor Father ride? Upon this, the Old man made his Son dismount, and got up himself. While they were marching in this manner, a third company began to insult the Father. You hard-hearted unnatural wretch, say they, how can you suffer that poor lad to wade through the dirt, while you like an alderman ride at your ease? The good-natured Miller stood corrected, and immediately took his Son up behind him. And now the next man they met exclaimed with more vehemence and indignation than all the rest---Was there ever such a couple of lazy boobies! to overload in so unconscionable a manner, a poor dumb creature, who is far less able to carry them than they are to carry him! The complying Old man would have been half inclined to make the trial, had not experience by this time sufficiently convinced him, that there cannot be a more fruitless attempt, than to endeavour to please all mankind.

FABLE

F A B L E II.

The Sorceress.

NIGHT and silence had now given repose to the whole world, when an old ill-natured Sorceress, in order to exercise her infernal arts, entered into a gloomy wood, that trembled at her approach. The scene of her horrid incantations was within the circumference of a large circle; in the center of which an altar was raised, where the hallowed vervain blazed in triangular flames, while the mischievous Hag pronounced the dreadful words, which bound all hell in obedience to her charms. She blows a raging pestilence from her lips into the neighbouring folds; the innocent cattle die, to afford a fit sacrifice to the infernal deities. The moon, by powerful spells drawn down from her orb, enters the wood: legions of spirits from Pluto's realms appear before the altar, and demand her pleasure. Tell me, said she, where I shall find what I have lost, my favourite little dog. How!--cried they all, enraged---Impertinent Beldame! must the order of nature be inverted, and the repose
of

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of every creature disturbed, for the sake of thy little dog?

F A B L E III.

The Cameleon.

TWO travellers happened on their journey to be engaged in a warm dispute about the colour of the Cameleon. One of them affirmed it was blue; that he had seen it with his own eyes, upon the naked branch of a tree, feeding on the air, in a very clear day. The other strongly asserted it was green, and that he had viewed it very closely and minutely on the broad leaf of a fig-tree. Both of them were positive, and the dispute was rising to a quarrel: but a third person luckily coming by, they agreed to refer the question to his decision. Gentlemen, said the arbitrator, with a smile of great self-satisfaction, you could not have been more lucky in your reference, as I happen to have caught one of them last night: but indeed you are both mistaken, for the creature is totally black. Black! impossible! Nay, quoth the umpire, with great assurance; the matter may soon be decided, for I immediately

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diately inclosed my Cameleon in a little paper box, and here it is. So saying, he drew it out of his pocket, opened his box, and behold it was as white as snow. The positive disputants looked equally surpris'd, and equally confounded: while the sagacious reptile, assuming the air of a philosopher, thus admonish'd them: Ye children of men, learn diffidence and moderation in your opinions. 'Tis true, you happen, in the present instance, to be all in the right, and have only considered the subject under different circumstances: but pray, for the future, allow others to have eye-sight as well as yourselves; and be candid enough not to condemn any man for judging of things as they appear to his own view.

F A B L E IV.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

A FLOCK of sheep were feeding in a meadow, while their dogs were asleep, and their shepherd at a distance playing on his pipe beneath the shade of a spreading elm. A young unexperienced Lamb observing a half-starved

starved wolf peeping through the pales of the enclosure, entered into conversation with him. Pray what are you seeking for here? said the Lamb. I am looking, replied the Wolf, for some tender grass; for nothing you know is more pleasant than to feed in a fresh pasture, and to slake one's thirst at a crystal stream: both which I perceive you enjoy within these pales in their utmost perfection. Happy creature! continued he, how much I envy your lot! who are in full possession of the utmost I desire: for philosophy has long taught me to be satisfied with a little. It seems then, returned the Lamb, those who say you feed on flesh, accuse you falsely, since a little grass will easily content you. If this be true, let us for the future live like brethren, and feed together. So saying, the simple Lamb imprudently crept thro' the fence, and became at once a prey to our pretended philosopher, and a sacrifice to his own inexperience and credulity.

FABLE

FABLE V.

The Fox and the Bramble.

A FOX closely pursued by a pack of dogs, took shelter under the covert of a Bramble. He rejoiced in this asylum, and for a while was very happy : but soon found, that if he attempted to stir, he was wounded by thorns and prickles on every side. However, making a virtue of necessity, he forebore to complain ; and comforted himself with reflecting, that no bliss is perfect ; that good and evil are mixed, and flow from the same fountain. These briars indeed, said he, will tear my skin a little, yet they keep off the dogs. For the sake of the good then, let me bear the evil with patience : each bitter has its sweet, and these brambles, though they wound my flesh, preserve my life from danger.

F A B L E VI.

The Falcon and the Hen.

DIFFERENT circumstances make the same action right or wrong, a virtue or a vice.

Of all the creatures I ever knew, said a Falcon to a Hen, you are certainly the most ungrateful. What instance of ingratitude, replied the Hen, can you justly charge upon me? The greatest, returned the Falcon; ingratitude to your highest benefactors, men. Do they not feed you every day, and shelter you every night? Nevertheless, when they endeavour to court you to them, you ungratefully forget all their kindness, and fly from them as from an enemy. Now I, who am wild by nature, and no way obliged to them; yet upon the least of their caresses, I suffer myself to be taken, and go, or come at their command. All this is very true, replied the Hen, but there may be a sufficient reason both for my fear, and your familiarity. I believe you never saw a single Falcon roast-
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ing at the fire ; whereas I have seen a hundred Hens trussed for that purpose.

F A B L E VII.

The Travellers and the Money-bag.

AS two men were travelling on the road, one of them espied a bag of Money lying on the ground, and picking it up, I am in luck this morning, said he, I have found a bag of Money. Yes, returned the other ; though, methinks you should not say *I*, but *We* have found it : for when two friends are travelling together, they ought equally to share in any accidental good fortune that may happen to attend them. No, rejoined the former, it was I that found it, and I must insist upon keeping it. He had no sooner spoken the words than they were alarmed with a hue and cry after a thief, who had that morning taken a purse upon the road. Lord, says the finder, this is extremely unfortunate ; we shall certainly be seized. Good Sir, replied the other, be pleased not to say *We*, but *I* : as you would not allow me a share in the prize, you have no right to make me a partner in the punishment.

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F A B L E

F A B L E VIII.

The discontented Ass.

IN the depth of winter a poor Ass prayed heartily for the spring, that he might exchange a cold lodging and a heartless truss of straw, for a little warm weather, and a mouthful of fresh grass. In a short time, according to his wish, the warm weather and the fresh grass came on; but brought with them so much toil and business, that he was soon as weary of the spring as before of the winter; and he now became impatient for the approach of summer. Summer arrives: but the heat, the harvest work, and other drudgeries and inconveniencies of the season set him as far from happiness as before; which he now flattered himself would be found in the plenty of autumn. But here too he is disappointed; for what with the carrying of apples, roots, fuel for the winter, and other provisions, he was in autumn more fatigued than ever. Having thus trod round the circle of the year, in a course of restless labour, uneasiness, and disappointment; and found no season, nor station of life, without

MODERN FABLES. 75

out its business and its trouble; he was forced at last to acquiesce in the comfortless season of winter, where his complaint began: convinced that in this world every situation has its inconvenience.

F A B L E IX.

The two Springs.

TWO Springs, which issued from the same mountain, began their course together: one of them took her way in a silent and gentle stream, while the other rushed along with a sounding and rapid current. Sister, said the latter, at the rate you move, you will probably be dried up before you advance much farther: whereas, for myself, I will venture a wager, that within two or three hundred furlongs I shall become navigable, and after distributing commerce and wealth wherever I flow, I shall majestically proceed to pay my tribute to the ocean: so farewell, dear sister, and patiently submit to your fate. Her sister, made no reply; but calmly descending to the meadows below, increased her stream by numberless little rills, which she collected in her progress, till at

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length

length she was enabled to rise into a considerable river: whilst the proud Stream, who had the vanity to depend solely upon her own sufficiency, continued a shallow brook, and was glad at last to be helped forward, by throwing herself into the arms of her despised sister.

F A B L E X.

The Rose and the Butterfly.

A FINE powdered Butterfly fell in love with a beautiful Rose, who expanded her charms in a neighbouring parterre. Matters were soon adjusted between them, and they mutually vowed eternally fidelity. The Butterfly, perfectly satisfied with the success of his amour, took a tender leave of his mistress, and did not return again till noon. What! said the Rose, when she saw him approaching, is the ardent passion you vowed, so soon extinguished? It is an age since you paid me a visit. But no wonder: for I observed you courting by turns every flower in the garden. You little coquette, replied the Butterfly, it well becomes *you* truly, to reproach me with my gallantries; when in fact I only copy the example

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ample which you yourself have set me. For, not to mention the satisfaction with which you admitted the kisses of the fragrant Zephyr, did I not see you displaying your charms to the bee, the fly, the wasp, and, in short, encouraging and receiving the addresses of every buzzing insect that fluttered within your view? If you will be a coquette, you must expect to find me inconstant.

F A B L E XI.

The Tortoise and the two Ducks.

VANITY and idle curiosity are qualities which generally prove destructive to those who suffer themselves to be governed by them.

A Tortoise, weary of passing her days in the same obscure corner, conceived a wonderful inclination to visit foreign countries. Two Ducks, whom the simple Tortoise acquainted with her intention, undertook to oblige her, upon the occasion. Accordingly they told her, that if she would fasten her mouth to the middle of a pole, they would take the two ends, and transport her whithersoever she chose to be

conveyed. The Tortoise approved of the expedient; and every thing being prepared, the Ducks began their flight with her. They had not travelled far in the air, when they were met by a crow, who enquiring what they were bearing along, they replied, the queen of the tortoises. The Tortoise, vain of the new and unmerited appellation, was going to confirm the title, when opening her mouth for that purpose, she let go her hold, and was dashed to pieces by her fall.

F A B L E XII.

The Cat and the old Rat.

A CERTAIN Cat had made such unmerciful havock among the vermin of her neighbourhood, that not a single Rat or Mouse dared venture to appear abroad. Puss was soon convinced, that if affairs remained in their present situation, she must be totally unsupplied with provision. After mature deliberation, therefore, she resolved to have recourse to stratagem. For this purpose, she suspended herself from a hook with her head downwards, pretending to be dead. The rats and mice

mice observing her, as they peeped from their holes, in this dangling attitude, concluded she was hanged for some misdemeanour; and with great joy immediately sallied forth in quest of their prey. Puss, as soon as a sufficient number were collected together, quitting her hold, dropped into the midst of them; and very few had the fortune to make good their retreat. This artifice having succeed so well, she was encouraged to try the event of a second. Accordingly, she whitened her coat all over, by rolling herself in a heap of flour, and in this disguise lay concealed in the bottom of a meal-tub. This stratagem was executed in general with the same effect as the former. But an old experienced Rat, altogether as cunning as his adversary, was not so easily ensnared. I don't much like, said he, that white heap yonder; something whispers me, there is mischief concealed under it. 'Tis true, it may be meal; but it may likewise be something that I shall not relish quite so well. There can be no harm, at least, in keeping at a proper distance: for caution, I am sure, is the parent of security.

F A B L E XIII.

The Country Maid and her Milk-pail.

WHEN men suffer their imagination to amuse them with the prospect of distant and uncertain improvements of their condition; they frequently sustain real losses, by their inattention to those affairs in which they are immediately concerned.

A Country Maid was walking very deliberately with a Pail of Milk upon her head, when she fell into the following train of reflections: The money, for which I shall sell this Milk, will enable me to increase my stock of eggs to three hundred. These eggs, allowing for what may prove addle, and what may be destroyed by vermin, will produce at least two hundred and fifty chickens. The chickens will be fit to carry to market about Christmas, when poultry always bear a good price; so that by May-day I cannot fail of having money enough to purchase a new Gown. Green—let me consider—yes, green becomes my complexion best, and green it shall be. In this dress I will go
to



13 Country Maid
and her Milk.



14 Cormorant
and Fishes.



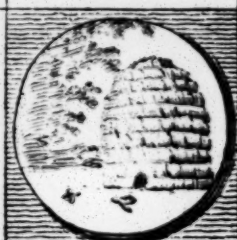
15 The Atheist
and the Aton.



16 The Lion
and the Mole.



17 The Spider
& Silkworm.



18 The Bee
and Fly.



19 Genius, Virtue,
& Reputation.



20 The Court
of Death.



21 Industry
and Cloth.



22 The
Hares Ears.



23 The Hermit
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24 The Passen-
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to the fair, where all the young fellows will strive to have me for a partner: but I shall perhaps refuse every one of them, and with an air of disdain toss from them. — Transported with this triumphant thought, she could not forbear acting with her head what thus passed in her imagination, when down came the Pail of Milk, and with it all her imaginary happiness.

F A B L E XIV.

The Cormorant and the Fishes.

IT is very imprudent to trust an enemy, or even a stranger, so far as to put one's self in his power.

A Cormorant whose eyes were become so dim by age, that he could not discern his prey at the bottom of the waters, bethought himself of a stratagem to supply his wants. Hark you friend, said he to a Gudgeon, whom he observed swimming near the surface of a certain canal, if you have any regard for yourself or your brethren, go this moment and acquaint them from me, that the owner of this peice

of water is determined to drag it a week hence. The Gudgeon immediately swam away, and made his report of this terrible news to a general assembly of the fishes : who unanimously agreed to send him back as their embassador to the Cormorant. The purport of his commission was to return him their thanks for the intelligence ; and to add their intreaties, that as he had been so good as to inform them of their danger, he would be graciously pleased to put them into a method of escaping it. That I will most readily, returned the artful Cormorant, and assist you with my best services into the bargain. You have only to collect yourselves together at the top of the water, and I will undertake to transport you one by one to my own residence, by the side of a solitary pool, to which no creature but myself ever found the way. The project was perfectly approved by the unwary fishes, and with great expedition performed by the deceitful Cormorant ; who having placed them in a shallow water, the bottom of which his eye could easily discern, they were all devoured by him in their turns, as his hunger or luxury required.

FABLE

F A B L E XV.

The Atheist and the Acorn.

IT was the fool who said in his heart, *There is no God*: into the breast of a wise man such a thought could never have entered. One of those refined reasoners, commonly called Minute Philosophers, was sitting at his ease beneath the shade of a large oak, while at his side the weak branches of a pumpkin trailed upon the ground. This threw our great logician into his old track of reasoning against providence. Is it consistent with common-sense, said he, that infinite wisdom should create a large and stately tree, with branches of prodigious strength, only to bear so small and insignificant a fruit as an Acorn? Or that so weak a stem, as that of a pumpkin, should be loaded with so disproportioned a weight? A child may see the absurdity of it. In the midst of this curious speculation, down dropt an Acorn, from one of the highest branches of the oak, full upon his head. How small a trifle may overturn the systems of mighty philosophers! Struck with the accident, he could not help

crying out, How providential it is that this was not a pumpion !

F A B L E XVI.

The Lynx and the Mole.

UNDER the covert of a thick wood, at the foot of a tree, as a Lynx lay whetting his teeth, and waiting for his prey ; he espied a Mole half buried under a hillock of her own raising. Alas, poor creature, said the Lynx, how much I pity thee ! Surely Jupiter has been very unkind, to debar thee from the light of the day, which rejoices the whole creation. Thou art certainly not above half alive ; and it would be doing thee a service to put an end to so unanimated a being. I thank you for your kindness, replied the Mole, but I think I have full as much vivacity as my state and circumstances require. For the rest, I am perfectly well contented with the faculties which Jupiter has allotted me, who I am sure wants not our direction in distributing his gifts with propriety. I have not, 'tis true, your piercing eyes ; but I have ears which answer all my purposes full as well. Hark ! for

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example, I am warned, by a noise which I hear behind you, to fly from danger. So saying, he slunk into the earth; while a javelin from the arm of a hunter pierced the quick-fighted Lynx to the heart.

F A B L E XVII.

The Spider and the Silkworm.

HOW vainly we promise ourselves, that our flimzy productions will be rewarded with immortal honour! A Spider, busied in spreading his web from one side of a room to the other, was asked by an industrious Silkworm, to what end he spent so much time and labour in making such a number of lines and circles? The Spider angrily replied, Do not disturb me, thou ignorant thing: I transmit my ingenuity to posterity, and fame is the object of my wishes. Just as he had spoken, a chambermaid, coming into the room to feed her Silkworms, saw the Spider at his work, and with one stroke of her broom, swept him away, and destroyed at once his labours, and his hopes of fame.

FABLE

F A B L E XVIII.

The Bee and the Fly.

A BEE observing a Fly frisking about her hive, asked him, in a very passionate tone, what he did there? Is it for such scoundrels as you, said she, to intrude into the company of the queens of the air? You have great reason, truly, replied the Fly, to be out of humour: I am sure they must be mad, who would have any concern with so quarrellsome a nation. And why so? thou saucy malapert, returned the enraged Bee; we have the best laws, and are governed by the best policy in the world. We feed upon the most fragrant flowers, and all our business is to make honey: honey, which equals nectar, thou tasteless wretch, who livest upon nothing but putrefaction and excrement. We live as we can, rejoined the Fly: poverty, I hope, is no crime; but passion is one, I am sure. The honey you make is sweet, I grant you; but your heart is all bitterness: for to be revenged on an enemy, you will destroy your own life; and are so inconsiderate in your rage, as to do more mischief

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chief to yourselves than to your adversary. Take my word for it, one had better have less considerable talents, and use them with more discretion.

F A B L E XIX.

Genius, Virtue and Reputation.

GENIUS, Virtue, and Reputation, three intimate friends, agreed to travel over the island of Great Britain, to see whatever might be worthy of observation. But as some misfortune, said they, may happen to separate us; let us consider before we set out, by what means we may find each other again. Should it be my ill fate, said Genius, to be severed from you, my associates, which heaven forbid! you may find me kneeling in devotion before the tomb of Shakespear; or rapt in some grove where Milton talked with angels; or musing in the grotto where Pope caught inspiration. Virtue, with a sigh, acknowledged that her friends were not very numerous: but were I to lose you, she cried, with whom I am at present so happily united; I should choose to take sanctuary in the temples
of

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of religion, in the palaces of royalty, or in the stately domes of ministers of state: but as it may be my ill fortune to be there denied admittance, enquire for some cottage where Contentment has a bower, and there you will certainly find me. Ah, my dear companions, said Reputation very earnestly, you, I perceive, when missing, may possibly be recovered; but take care, I intreat you, always to keep sight of me, for if I am once lost, I am never to be retrieved.

F A B L E XX.

The Court of Death.

DEATH, the king of terrors, was determined to choose a prime minister; and his pale courtiers, the ghastly train of diseases, were all summoned to attend: when each preferred his claim to the honour of this illustrious office. Fever urged the numbers he destroyed; cold Palsy set forth his pretensions, by shaking all his limbs; and Dropsy, by his swelled unwieldy carcase. Gout hobbled up, and alledged his great power in racking every joint; and Asthma's inability to speak, was a strong

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strong, though silent argument in favour of his claim. Stone and Cholic pleaded their violence; Plague, his rapid progress in destruction; and Consumption, though slow, insisted that he was sure. In the midst of this contention, the court was disturbed with the noise of music, dancing, feasting, and revelry; when immediately entered a lady, with a bold lascivious air, and a flushed and jovial countenance: she was attended on one hand by a troop of cooks and bacchanals; and on the other by a train of wanton youths and damsels, who danced half naked to the softest musical instruments: her name was INTEMPERANCE. She waved her hand, and thus addressed the crowd of Diseases: Give way, ye sickly band of pretenders, nor dare to vie with my superior merits in the service of this great Monarch. Am not I your parent? the author of your beings? Do ye not derive your power of shortening human life almost wholly from me? Who then so fit as myself for this important office? The grisly Monarch grinned a smile of approbation, placed her at his right hand, and she immediately became his *prime* favourite, and *principal* minister.

FABLE

FABLE XXI.

Industry and Sloth.

HOW many live in the world as useless as if they had never been born! They pass through life like a bird through the air, and leave no track behind them; waste the prime of their days in deliberating what they shall do; and bring them to a period, without coming to any determination.

An indolent young man being asked why he lay in bed so long, jocosely and carelessly answered—Every morning of my life I am hearing causes. I have two fine girls, their names are Industry and Sloth, close at my bedside, as soon as ever I awake, pressing their different suits. One intreats me to get up, the other persuades me to lie still: and then they alternately give me various reasons, why I should rise, and why I should not. This detains me so long, as it is the duty of an impartial judge to hear all that can be said on either side, that before the pleadings are over, it is time to go to dinner.

FABLE

FABLE XXII.

The Hare's Ears.

AN elk having accidentally gored a lion, the monarch was so exasperated, that he sent forth an edict, commanding all horned beasts, on pain of death, to depart his dominions. A Hare, observing the shadow of her ears, was much alarmed at their long and lofty appearance; and running to one of her friends, acquainted him that she was resolved to quit the country. For should I happen, said she, however undesignedly, to give offence to my superiors, my Ears may be construed to come within the horn-act. Her friend smiled at her apprehensions; and asked how it was possible that Ears could be mistaken for horns? Had I no more Ears than an Ostrich, replied the Hare, I would not trust them in the hands of an informer: for truth and innocence are arguments of little force, against the logic of power and malice in conjunction.

FABLE

FABLE XXIII.

The Hermit and the Bear.

AN imprudent friend often does as much mischief by his too great zeal, as the worst enemy could effect by his malice.

A certain Hermit having done a good office to a Bear, the grateful creature was so sensible of his obligation, that he begged to be admitted as the guardian and companion of his solitude. The Hermit willingly accepted his offer, and conducted him to his cell, where they passed their time together in an amicable manner. One very hot day, the Hermit having laid him down to sleep, the officious Bear employed himself in driving away the flies from his patron's face. But in spite of all his care, one of the flies perpetually returned to the attack, and at last settled upon the Hermit's nose. Now I shall have you most certainly, said the Bear; and with the best intentions imaginable, gave him a violent blow on the face; which very effectually indeed demolished the Fly, but at the same time most terribly bruised the face of his benefactor.

FABLE

F A B L E XXIV.

The Passenger and the Pilot.

IT had blown a violent storm at sea, and the whole crew of a large vessel were in imminent danger of shipwreck. After the rolling of the waves were somewhat abated, a certain Passenger, who had never been at sea before, observing the Pilot to have appeared wholly unconcerned even in their greatest danger, had the curiosity to ask him what death his father died. What death? said the Pilot, why he perished at Sea, as my grandfather did before him. And are you not afraid of trusting yourself to an element that has proved thus fatal to your family? Afraid! by no means; why, we must all die: is not your father dead? Yes, but he died in his bed. And why then are you not afraid of trusting yourself to your bed! Because I am there perfectly secure. It may be so, replied the Pilot; but if the hand of providence is equally extended over all places, there is no more reason for me to be afraid of going to sea, than for you to be afraid of going to bed.

F A B L E

FABLE XXV.

The partial Judge.

A FARMER came to a neighbouring Lawyer, expressing great concern for an accident which he said had just happened. One of your oxen, continued he, has been gored by an unlucky bull of mine, and I should be glad to know how I am to make you reparation. Thou art a very honest fellow, replied the Lawyer, and wilt not think it unreasonable that I expect one of thy oxen in return. It is no more than justice, quoth the Farmer, to be sure; but what did I say?—I mistake---It is your bull that has killed one of my oxen. Indeed! says the Lawyer, that alters the case: I must enquire into the affair; and if---And *if!* said the Farmer---the business I find would have been concluded without an *if*, had you been as ready to do justice to others as to exact it from them.

FABLE



25 The Judge



28 The Judge



31 The Judge & the Lawyer



34 The Judge & the Lawyer



25 *The partial Judge.*



26 *Fox that had lost his tail.*



27 *Nobleman & his Son.*



28 *Jupiter and y^e Herdsman.*



29 *The Eagle & Owl.*



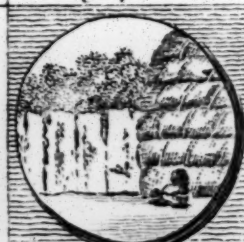
30 *The Plame among y^e Beasts.*



31 *The Cat, y^e Cock, & young Mouse.*



32 *The Farmer & his Dog.*



33 *The Goat & the Bee.*



34 *The Owl & the Eagle.*



35 *Lick Lion, Fox, and Wolf.*



36 *Blind man and Lame.*

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F A B L E XXVI.

The Fox that had lost his Tail.

A FOX having been unwarily caught in a trap, with much struggling and difficulty at length disengaged himself; not however without being obliged to leave his tail behind him. The joy he felt at his escape, was somewhat abated when he began to consider the price he had paid for it; and he was a good deal mortified by reflecting on the ridiculous figure he should make among his brethren, without a tail. In the agitation of his thoughts upon this occasion, an expedient occurred to him which he resolved to try, in order to remove this disgraceful singularity. With this view he assembled his tribe together, and set forth in a most elaborate speech how much he had at heart whatever tended to the public weal: he had often thought, he said, on the length and busyness of their tails; was verily persuaded that it was much more burthensome than ornamental, and rendered them besides an easier prey to their enemies. He earnestly recommended it to them therefore, to discharge them-

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themselves of so useless and dangerous an incumbrance. My good friend, replied an old Fox, who had listened very attentively to his harangue, we are much obliged to you, no doubt, for the concern you express upon our account: but pray turn about before the company, for I cannot for my life help suspecting, that you would not be quite so solicitous to ease us of our tails, if you had not unluckily lost your own.

F A B L E XXVII.

The Nobleman and his Son.

A CERTAIN Nobleman, much infected by superstition, dreamed one night that his only Son, a youth about fifteen years of age, was thrown from his horse as he was hunting, and killed upon the spot. This idle dream made so strong an impression upon the weak and credulous father, that he formed a resolution never more to suffer his Son to partake of this his favourite diversion. The next morning that the hounds went out, the young man requested permission to follow them; but instead of receiving it, as usual, his father acquainted

quainted him with his dream, and peremptorily enjoined him to forbear the sport. The youth, greatly mortified at this unexpected refusal, left the room much disconcerted, and it was with some difficulty that he restrained his passion from indecently breaking out in his father's presence. But upon his return to his own apartment, passing through a gallery of pictures, in which was a piece representing a company of gypsies telling a country girl her fortune—'Tis owing, said he, to a ridiculous superstition of the same kind with that of this simple wench, that I am debarred from one of the principal pleasures of my life: at the same time, with great emotion, he struck his hand against the canvas; when a rusty old nail behind the picture ran far into his wrist. The pain and anguish of the wound threw the youth into a violent fever, which proved too powerful for the skill of the physicians, and in a few days put an end to his life: illustrating an observation, that an over-cautious attention to avoid evils, often brings them upon us: and that we are frequently thrown headlong into misfortunes by the very means we make use of to avoid them.

FABLE XXVIII.

Jupiter and the Herdsman.

A HERDSMAN missed a young heifer out of his grounds, and after having diligently sought for it in vain, when he could by no other means gain intelligence of it, betook himself at last to his prayers. Great Jupiter, said he, shew me but the villain who has done me this injury, and I will give thee in sacrifice the finest kid from my flock. He had no sooner uttered his petition, than turning the corner of a wood, he was struck with the sight of a monstrous lion, preying on the carcase of his heifer. Trembling and pale, O Jupiter, cried he, I offered thee a kid if thou would grant my petition; I now offer thee a bull, if thou wilt deliver me from the consequence of it.

FABLE

F A B L E XXIX.

The Eagle and the Owl.

AN Eagle and an Owl having entered into a league of mutual amity, one of the articles of their treaty was, that the former should not prey upon the younglings of the latter. But tell me, said the Owl, should you know my little ones, if you were to see them? Indeed I should not, replied the Eagle; but if you describe them to me, it will be sufficient. You are to observe then, returned the Owl, in the first place, that the charming creatures are perfectly well shaped; in the next, that there is a remarkable sweetness and vivacity in their countenances; and then there is something in their voices so peculiarly melodious --- 'Tis enough, interrupted the Eagle; by these marks I cannot fail of distinguishing them: and you may depend upon their never receiving any injury from me. It happened not long afterwards, as the Eagle was upon the wing in quest of his prey, that he discovered amidst the ruins of an old castle a nest of grim-faced ugly birds, with gloomy countenances, and a voice

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like that of the Furies. These, undoubtedly, said he, cannot be the offspring of my friend, and so I shall venture to make free with them. He had scarce finished his repast and departed, when the Owl returned; who, finding nothing of her brood remaining but some fragments of the mangled carcases, broke out into the most bitter exclamations against the cruel and perfidious author of her calamity. A neighbouring Bat, who over-heard her lamentations, and had been witness to what had passed between her and the Eagle, very gravely told her, that she had nobody to blame for this misfortune but herself; whose blind prejudices in favour of her children had prompted her to give such a description of them, as did not resemble them in any one single feature or quality.

Parents should very carefully guard against that weak partiality towards their children, which renders them blind to their failings and imperfections: as no disposition is more likely to prove prejudicial to their future welfare.

FABLE

F A B L E XXX.

The Plague among the Beasts.

A MORTAL distemper once raged among the Beasts, and swept away prodigious numbers. After it had continued some time without abatement, it was concluded in an assembly of the brute creation to be a judgment inflicted upon them for their sins; and a day was appointed for a general confession; when it was agreed, that he who appeared to be the greatest sinner, should suffer death, as an atonement for the rest. The Fox was appointed father confessor upon the occasion; and the Lion with great generosity condescended to be the first in making public confession. For my part, said he, I must own I have been an enormous offender; I have killed many innocent sheep in my time, nay once, but it was a case of necessity, I made a meal of the Shepherd. The Fox, with much gravity, acknowledged that these in any other than the king would have been inexpiable crimes; but that his majesty had certainly a right to a few silly sheep, nay, and to the shepherd too, in a case of necessity.

cessity. The judgment of the Fox was applauded by all the superior savages; and the Tyger, the Leopard, the Bear, and the Wolf, made confession of many enormities of the like sanguinary nature; which were all palliated or excused with the same lenity and mercy, and their crimes accounted so venial, as scarce to deserve the name of offences. At last, a poor penitent Ass, with great contrition, acknowledged, that once, going through the parson's meadow, being very hungry, and tempted by the sweetness of the grass, he had cropt a little of it, not more however in quantity than the tip of his tongue: he was very sorry for the misdemeanour, and hoped—Hope! exclaimed the Fox with singular zeal, what canst thou hope for, after the commission of so heinous a crime? What! eat the parson's grass! O sacrilege! This, this is the flagrant wickedness, my brethren, which has drawn the wrath of heaven upon our heads, and this the notorious offender, whose death must make atonement for all our transgressions. So saying, he ordered his entrails for sacrifice, and the rest of the beasts went to dinner upon his carcase.

F A B L E

FABLE XXXI.

The Cat, the Cock, and the young Mouse.

A YOUNG Mouse, who had seen very little of the world, came running one day to his mother in great haste—O mother, said he, I am frighted almost to death? I have seen the most extraordinary creature that ever was. He has a fierce angry look, and struts about upon two legs. A strange piece of flesh grows on his head, and another under his throat, as red as blood. He flapped his arms against his sides, as if he intended to rise into the air; and stretching out his head, he opened a sharp-pointed mouth so wide, that I thought he was preparing to swallow me up: then he roared at me so horribly, that I trembled every joint, and was glad to run home as fast as I could. If I had not been frightened away by this terrible monster, I was just going to commence an acquaintance with the prettiest creature you ever saw. She had a soft furr skin, thicker than ours, and all beautifully streaked with black and grey; with a modest look, and a demeanour so humble and courteous, that me-

thought I could have fallen in love with her. Then she had a fine long tail, which she waved about so prettily, and looked so earnestly at me, that I do believe she was just going to speak to me, when the horrid monster frightened me away. Ah, my dear child, said the mother, you have escaped being devoured, but not by that monster you was so much afraid of: which in truth was only a bird, and would have done you no manner of harm. Whereas the sweet creature, of whom you seem so fond, was no other than a Cat; who, under that hypocritical countenance, conceals the most inveterate hatred to all our race, and subsists entirely by devouring Mice. Learn from this incident, my dear, never whilst you live to rely on outward appearances,

F A B L E XXXII.

The Farmer and his Dog.

A FARMER who had just stepped into the field to mend a gap in one of his fences, found at his return the cradle, where he had left his only child asleep, turned upside down, the clothes all torn and bloody, and his

his dog lying near it besmeared also with blood. Immediately conceiving that the creature had destroyed his child, he instantly dashed out his brains with the hatchet in his hand: when turning up the cradle, he found his child unhurt, and an enormous serpent lying dead on the floor, killed by that faithful dog, whose courage and fidelity in preserving the life of his son deserved another kind of reward. These affecting circumstances afforded him a striking lesson, how dangerous it is too hastily to give way to the blind impulse of a sudden passion.

F A B L E XXXIII.

The Gnat and the Bee.

AGNAT half starved with cold, and pinched with hunger, came early one morning to a bee-hive, begged the relief of charity, and offered to teach music in the family, on the humble terms of diet and lodging. The Bee received her petitioner with a cold civility, and desired to be excused. I bring up all my children, said she, to my own useful trade, that they may be able when they grow

up, to get an honest livelihood by their industry. Besides, how do you think I could be so imprudent as to teach them an art, which I see has reduced its professor to indigence and beggary?

F A B L E XXXIV.

The Owl and the Eagle.

AN Owl sat blinking in the trunk of an hollow tree, and arraigned the brightness of the sun. What is the use of its beams, said she, but to dazzle one's eyes so that one cannot see a mouse? For my part, I am at a loss to conceive for what purpose so glaring an object was created. We had certainly been much better without it. O fool! replied an Eagle, perched on a branch of the same tree, to rail at excellence which thou canst not taste; ignorant that the fault is not in the sun, but in thyself. All, 'tis true, have not faculties to understand, nor powers to enjoy the benefit of it: but must the business and the pleasures of the world be obstructed, that an Owl may catch mice?

FABLE

FABLE XXXV.

The sick Lion, the Fox, and the Wolf.

ALION, having surfeited himself with feasting too luxuriously on the carcase of a wild boar, was seized with a violent and dangerous disorder. The beasts of the forests flocked in great numbers to pay their respects to him upon the occasion, and scarce one was absent except the Fox. The Wolf, an ill-natured and malicious beast, seized this opportunity to accuse the Fox of pride, ingratitude, and disaffection to his majesty. In the midst of his invective, the Fox entered; who having heard part of the Wolf's accusation, and observing the Lion's countenance to be kindled into wrath, thus adroitly excused himself, and retorted upon his accuser. I see many here, who with mere lip-service have pretended to shew you their loyalty; but for my part, from the moment I heard of your majesty's illness, neglecting useless compliments, I employed myself day and night to enquire among the most learned physicians, an infallible remedy for your disease, and have at length happily been in-

formed of one. It is a plaister made of part of a Wolf's skin, taken warm from his back, and laid to your majesty's stomach. This remedy was no sooner proposed, than it was determined that the experiment should be tried: and whilst the operation was performing, the Fox, with a sarcastic smile, whispered this useful maxim in the Wolf's ear.—If you would be safe from harm yourself, learn for the future not to meditate mischief against others.

F A B L E XXXVI.

The Blind Man and the Lame.

TIS from our wants and infirmities that almost all the connections of society take their rise.

A Blind man, being stopped in a bad piece road, meets with a Lame man, and intreats him to guide him through the difficulty he was got into. How can I do that, replied the Lame man, since I am scarce able to drag myself along? but as you appear to be very strong, if you will carry me, we will seek our fortunes together.

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together. It will then be my interest to warn you of any thing that may obstruct your way; your feet shall be my feet, and my eyes yours. With all my heart, returned the Blind man; let us render each other our mutual services. So taking his lame companion on his back, they by means of their union travelled on with safety and pleasure.

FABLE XXXVII.

The Lion, the Bear, the Monkey, and the Fox.

THE Tyrant of the forest issued a proclamation, commanding all his subjects to repair immediately to his royal den. Among the rest, the Bear made his appearance: but pretending to be offended with the steams which issued from the monarch's apartments, he was imprudent enough to hold his nose in his majesty's presence. This insolence was so highly resented, that the Lion in a rage laid him dead at his feet. The Monkey, observing what had passed, trembled for his carcase; and attempted to conciliate favour by the most abject flattery. He began with protesting, that for his part he thought the apartments were

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perfumed with Arabian spices; and exclaiming against the rudeness of the Bear, admired the beauty of his majesty's paws, so happily formed, he said, to correct the insolence of clowns. This fulsome adulation, instead of being received as he expected, proved no less offensive than the rudeness of the Bear: and the courtly Monkey was in like manner extended by the side of Sir Bruin. And now his majesty cast his eye upon the Fox. Well, Reynard, said he, and what scent do you discover here? Great prince, replied the cautious Fox, my nose was never esteemed my most distinguishing sense; and at present I would by no means venture to give my opinion, as I have unfortunately got a terrible cold.

F A B L E XXXVIII.

The Owl and the Nightingale.

A FORMAL solemn Owl had many years made his habitation in a grove amongst the ruins of an old monastery, and had pored so often on some mouldy manuscripts, the stupid relics of a monkish library, that he grew infected with the pride and pedantry of the place;

place; and mistaking gravity for wisdom, would sit whole days with his eyes half shut, fancying himself profoundly learned. It happened, as he sat one evening, half buried in meditation, and half asleep, that a Nightingale, unluckily perching near him, began her melodious lays. He started from his reverie, and with a horrid screech interrupting her song—Be gone, cried he, thou impertinent minstrel, nor distract with noisy dissonance my sublime contemplations; and know, vain songster, that harmony consists in truth alone, which is gained by laborious study; and not in languishing notes, fit only to sooth the ear of a love-sick maid. Conceited pedant, returned the Nightingale, whose wisdom lies only in the feathers that muffle up thy unmeaning face; music is a natural and rational entertainment, and though not adapted to the ears of an Owl, has ever been relished and admired by all who are possessed of true taste and elegance.

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FABLE

F A B L E XXXIX.

The Ant and the Caterpillar.

AS a Caterpillar was advancing very slowly along one of the alleys of a beautiful garden, he was met by a pert lively Ant, who tossing up her head with a scornful air, cried, Prithee get out of the way, thou poor creeping animal, and do not presume to obstruct the paths of thy superiors, by wriggling along the road, and besmearing the walks appropriated to their footsteps. Poor creature! thou lookest like a thing half made, which nature not liking threw by unfinished. I could almost pity thee, methinks; but it is beneath one of my quality to talk to such mean creatures as thou art: and so, poor crawling wretch, adieu.

The humble Caterpillar, struck dumb with this disdainful language, retired, went to work, wound himself up in a silken cell, and at the appointed time came out a beautiful Butterfly. Just as he was sallying forth, he observed the scornful Ant passing by. Proud insect, said he,

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he, stop a moment, and learn from the circumstances in which you now see me, never to despise any one for that condition in which Providence has thought fit to place him; as there is none so mean, but may one day, either in this state or in a better, be exalted above those who looked down upon him with unmerited contempt.

F A B L E XL.

The two Foxes.

TWO Foxes formed a stratagem to enter a hen-roost: which having successfully executed, and killed the cock, the hens, and the chickens, they began to feed upon them with singular satisfaction. One of the Foxes, who was young and inconsiderate, was for devouring them all upon the spot: the other, who was old and covetous, proposed to reserve some of them for another time. "For experience, child, said he, has made me wise, and I have seen many unexpected events since I came into the world. Let us provide, therefore, against what may happen, and not consume all our store at one meal." "All this is
"won-

“wonderous wise, replied the young Fox ; but
 “for my part, I am resolved not to stir till I
 “have eaten as much as will serve me a whole
 “week ; for who would be mad enough to re-
 “turn hither ? when it is certain the owner of
 “these fowls will watch for us, and if he
 “should catch us, would certainly put us to
 “death.” After this short discourse, each pur-
 sued his own scheme : the young Fox eat till
 he burst himself, and had scarcely strength to
 reach his hole before he died. The old one,
 who thought it much better to deny his appe-
 tite for the present, and lay up provision for
 the future, returned the next day, and was kil-
 led by the farmer. Thus every age has its pe-
 culiar vice ; the young suffer by their insatiable
 thirst after pleasure ; and the old, by their in-
 corrigible and inordinate avarice.

F A B L E XLI.

The conceited Owl.

A YOUNG Owl, having accidentally
 seen himself in a crystal fountain, con-
 ceived the highest opinion of his personal per-
 fections. 'Tis time, said he, that Hymen
 should

should give me children as beautiful as myself, to the glory of the night, and the ornament of our groves. What pity would it be, if the race of the most accomplished of birds should be extinct for want of a mate; Happy the female who is destined to spend her life with me! Full of these self-approving thoughts, he intreated the Crow to propose a match between him and the royal daughter of the Eagle. Do you imagine, said the Crow, that the noble Eagle, whose pride it is to gaze on the brightest of the heavenly luminaries, will consent to marry his daughter to you, who cannot so much as open your eyes whilst it is day-light? But the self-conceited Owl was deaf to all that his friend could urge; who after much persuasion, was at length prevailed upon to undertake the commission. His proposal was received in the manner that might be expected: the king of birds laughed him to scorn. However, being a monarch of some humour, he ordered him to acquaint the Owl that if he would meet him the next morning at sun-rise in the middle of the sky, he would consent to give him his daughter in marriage. The presumptuous Owl undertook to perform the condition; but being dazzled with the sun, and his head growing giddy,

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giddy, he fell from his height upon a rock; from whence being pursued by a flight of birds, he was glad at last to make his escape into the hollow of an old oak; where he passed the remainder of his days in that obscurity for which nature designed him.

F A B L E XLII.

The Fox and the Cat.

NOTHING is more common than for men to condemn the very same actions in others, which they practise themselves whenever occasion offers.

A Fox and a Cat having made a party to travel together, beguiled the tediousness of their journey by a variety of philosophical conversations. Of all the moral virtues, exclaimed Reynard, mercy is sure the noblest! What say you, my sage friend, is it not so? Undoubtedly, replied the Cat, with a most demure countenance; nothing is more becoming, in a creature of any sensibility, than a compassionate disposition. While they were
thus

thus moralizing, and mutually complimenting each other on the wisdom of their respective reflections, a Wolf darted out from a wood upon a flock of sheep, which were feeding in an adjacent meadow; and without being in the least affected by the moving lamentations of a poor lamb, devoured it before their eyes. Horrible cruelty! exclaimed the Cat; why does he not feed on vermin, instead of making his barbarous meals on such innocent creatures? Reynard agreed with his friend in the observation; to which he added several very pathetic remarks on the odiousness of a sanguinary temper. Their indignation was rising in its warmth and zeal, when they arrived at a little cottage by the way-side; where the tender-hearted Reynard immediately cast his eye upon a fine cock that was strutting about the yard. And now, adieu moralizing: he leaped over the pales, and without any sort of scruple, demolished his prize in an instant. In the mean while, a plump mouse which ran out of the stable, totally put to flight our Cat's philosophy, who fell to the repast without the least commiseration.

F A B L E XLIII.

The two Horses.

TWO horses were travelling the road together; one loaded with a sack of flour, the other with a sum of money. The latter, proud of his splendid burthen, tossed up his head with an air of conscious superiority, and every now and then cast a look of contempt upon his humble companion. In passing thro' a wood, they were met by a gang of highwaymen, who immediately seized upon the horse that was carrying the treasure: but the spirited steed not being altogether disposed to stand so quietly as was necessary for their purpose, they beat him most unmercifully, and after plundering him of his boasted load, left him to lament at his leisure the cruel bruises he had received. Friend, said his despised companion to him, who had now reason to triumph in his turn, distinguished posts are often dangerous to those who possess them: if you had served a miller, as I do, you might have travelled the road unmolested.

F A B L E

F A B L E XLIV.

The Dove and the Ant.

WE should be always ready to do good offices, even to the meanest of our fellow creatures ; as there is no one to whose assistance we may not, upon some occasion or other, be greatly indebted.

A Dove was sipping from the banks of a rivulet, when an Ant, who was at the same time trailing a grain of corn along the edge of the brook, inadvertently fell in. The Dove observing the helpless insect struggling in vain to reach the shore, was touched with compassion ; and plucking a blade of grass, dropped it into the stream ; by means of which the poor Ant, like a ship-wrecked sailor upon a plank, got safe to land. She had scarcely arrived there, when she perceived a fowler just going to discharge his piece at her deliverer : upon which she instantly crept up his foot and stung him on the ankle. The sportsman starting, occasioned a rustling among the boughs, which alarmed the dove, who immediately sprung up, and

and by that means escaped the danger with which she was threatened.

F A B L E XLV.

The Parrot.

A CERTAIN widower, in order to amuse his solitary hours, and in some measure supply the conversation of his departed helpmate of loquacious memory, determined to purchase a Parrot. With this view, he applied to a dealer in birds, who shewed him a large collection of parrots of various kinds. Whilst they were exercising their talkative talents before him, one repeating the cries of the town, another asking for a cup of sack, and a third bawling out for a coach, he observed a green parrot, perched in a thoughtful manner at a distance upon the foot of a table: And so you, my grave gentleman, said he, are quite silent. To which the Parrot replied, like a philosophical bird, "I think the more." Pleased with this sensible answer, our widower immediately paid down his price, and took home the bird, conceiving great things from a creature who had given so striking a specimen

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specimen of his parts. But after having instructed him during a whole month, he found, to his great disappointment, that he could get nothing more from him than the fatiguing repetition of the same dull sentence, "I think the more." I find, said he, in great wrath, that thou art a most invincible fool: and ten times more a fool was I, for having formed a favourable opinion of thy abilities upon no better foundation than an affected solemnity.

F A B L E XLVI.

The Cat and the Bat.

A CAT having devoured her master's favourite bulfinch, overheard him threatening to put her to death the moment he could find her. In this distress she preferred a prayer to Jupiter; vowing, if he would deliver her from her present danger, that never while she lived would she eat another bird. Not long afterwards, a Bat most invitingly flew into the room where puss was purring in the window. The question was how to act upon so tempting an occasion? Her appetite pressed hard on one side; and her vow threw some scruples in

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her way on the other. At length she hit upon a most convenient distinction to remove all difficulties, by determining that as a bird indeed it was unlawful prize, but as a mouse she might very conscientiously eat it; and accordingly, without further debate, fell to the repast.

Thus it is that men are apt to impose upon themselves by vain and groundless distinctions, when conscience and principle are at variance with interest and inclination.

F A B L E XLVII.

The two Lizards.

AS two Lizards were basking under a south wall, How contemptible, said one of them, is our condition! We exist, 'tis true, but that is all: for we hold no sort of rank in the creation, and are utterly unnoticed by the world. Curfed obscurity! Why was I not rather born a stag, to range at large, the pride and glory of some royal forest? It happened, that in the midst of these unjust murmurs, a pack of hounds was heard in full cry after the
very

very creature he was envying, who being quite spent with the chase, was torn in pieces by the dogs in sight of our two Lizards. And is this the lordly stag, whose place in the creation you wish to hold? said the wiser Lizard to his complaining friend: Let his sad fate teach you to bless providence for placing you in that humble situation, which secures you from the dangers of a more elevated rank.

F A B L E XLVIII.

Jupiter's Lottery.

JUPITER, in order to please mankind, directed Mercury to give notice that he had established a Lottery, in which there were no blanks; and that, amongst a variety of other valuable chances, Wisdom was the highest prize. It was Jupiter's command, that in this Lottery some of the gods should also become adventurers. The tickets being disposed of, and the wheels placed, Mercury was employed to preside at the drawing. It happened that the best prize fell to Minerva: upon which a general murmur ran through

the assembly, and hints were thrown out that Jupiter had used some unfair practices to secure this desirable lot to his daughter. Jupiter, that he might at once both punish and silence these impious clamours of the human race, presented them with folly in the place of Wisdom; with which they went away perfectly well contented. And from that time the greatest Fools have always looked upon themselves as the wisest men.

F A B L E XLIX.

The litigious Cats.

TWO Cats having stolen some cheese, could not agree about dividing their prize. In order therefore to settle the dispute, they consented to refer the matter to a Monkey. The proposed arbitrator very readily accepted the office, and producing a balance, put a part into each scale. "Let me see—(said he) ay--this lump outweighs the other:" and immediately bit off a considerable piece, in order to reduce it, he observed, to an equilibrium. The opposite scale was now become the heaviest; which afforded our conscientious judge

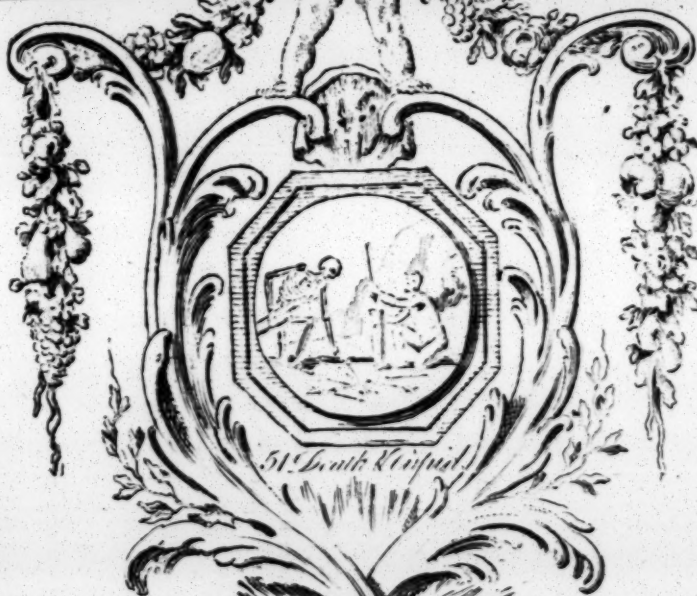




49. The *languis*
Cats.



50. The *two*
Boats.



51. *South River*



52. The
Mock-bird.



53. The
Spectacles.



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judge an additional reason for a second mouthful. Hold, hold, said the two Cats, who began to be alarmed for the event, give us our respective shares, and we are satisfied. If *you* are satisfied, returned the Monkey, Justice is not: a case of this intricate nature is by no means so soon determined. Upon which he continued to nibble first one piece, and then the other, till the poor Cats, seeing their cheese gradually diminishing, intreated him to give himself no farther trouble, but deliver to them what remained. Not so fast, I beseech you, friends, replied the Monkey; we owe justice to ourselves as well as to you: what remains is due to me in right of my office. Upon which he crammed the whole into his mouth, and with great gravity dismissed the court.

F A B L E L.

The two Dogs.

HASTY and inconsiderate connections are generally attended with great disadvantages: and much of every man's good or ill fortune depends upon the choice he makes of his friends.

A good-natured Spaniel overtook a surly Mastiff, as he was travelling upon the high road. Tray, although an entire stranger to Tyger, very civilly accosted him: And if it would be no interruption, he said, he should be glad to bear him company on his way. Tyger, who happened not to be altogether in so growling a mood as usual, accepted the proposal: and they very amicably pursued their journey together. In the midst of their conversation they arrived at the next village; where Tyger began to display his malignant disposition, by an unprovoked attack upon every dog he met. The villagers immediately sallied forth with great indignation to rescue their respective favourites; and falling upon our two friends without distinction or mercy, poor Tray was most cruelly treated, for no other reason but his being found in bad company.

F A B L E LI.

Death and Cupid.

JUPITER sent forth death and Cupid to travel round the world, giving each of them a bow in his hand, and a quiver of ar-

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rows at his back. It was ordered by the supreme disposer of all events, that the arrows of Love should only wound the young, in order to supply the decays of mortal men; and those of death were to strike old age, and free the world from an useless charge. Our travellers, being one day extremely fatigued with their journey, rested themselves under the covert of a wood, and throwing down their arrows in a promiscuous manner, they both fell fast asleep. They had not reposed themselves long, before they were awakened by a sudden noise; when hastily gathering up their arms, each in a confusion took by mistake some of the darts that belonged to the other. By this means, it frequently happened that Death vanquished the young, and Cupid subdued the old. Jupiter observed the error, but did not think proper to redress it; foreseeing that some good might arise from their unlucky exchange. And, in fact, if men were wise, they would learn from this mistake to be apprehensive of death in their youth, and to guard against the amorous passions in their old age.

F A B L E LII.

The Mock-bird.

THERE is a certain bird in the West-Indies, which has the faculty of mimicking the notes of every other songster, without being able himself to add any original strains to the concert. As one of these Mock-birds was displaying his talent of ridicule among the branches of a venerable wood: 'Tis very well, said a little warbler, speaking in the name of all the rest, we grant you that our music is not without its faults: but why will you not favour us with a strain of your own?

F A B L E

F A B L E LIII.

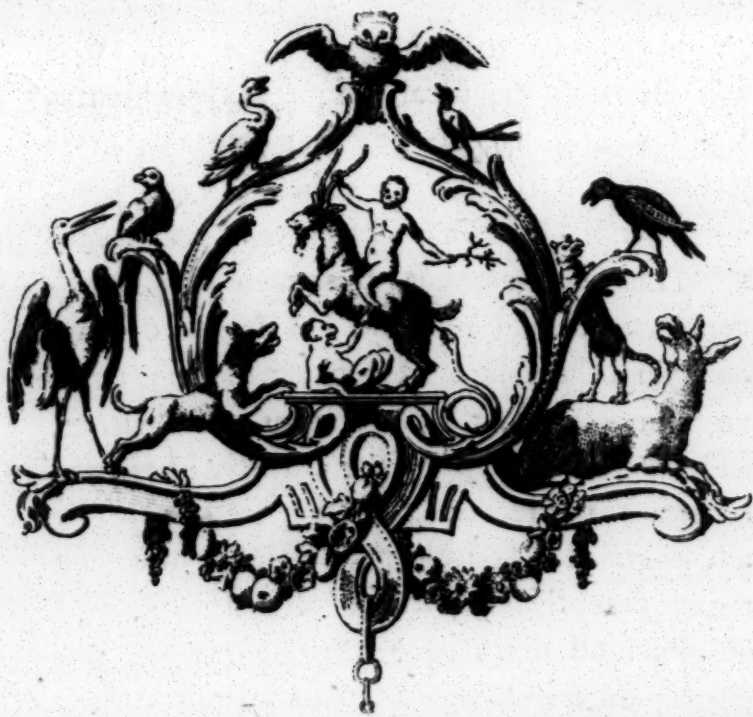
The Spectacles.

HOW strangely all mankind differ in their opinions! and how strongly each is attached to his own!

Jupiter one day, enjoying himself over a bowl of nectar, and in a merry humour, determined to make mankind a present. Momus was appointed to convey it to them; who mounted on a rapid car was presently on earth. Come hither, says he, ye happy mortals; great Jupiter has opened for your benefit his all-gracious hands. 'Tis true, he made you somewhat short-sighted, but to remedy that inconvenience, behold how he has favoured you! So saying, he unloosed his portmanteau; when an infinite number of Spectacles tumbled out, and were picked up by the crowd with all the eagerness imaginable. There were enough for all, every man had his pair. But it was soon found that these Spectacles did not represent objects to all mankind alike: for one pair was purple, another blue; one was white, and an-

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other black: some of the glaffes were red, some green, and some yellow. In fhort, there were of all manner of colours, and every fhade of colour. However, notwithstanding this diversity, every man was charmed with his own, as believing it the trueft; and enjoyed in opinion all the fatisfaction of reality.



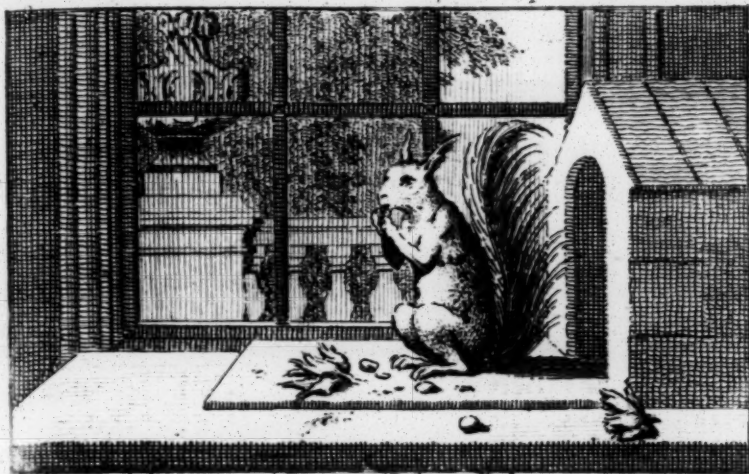
F A B L E S.

B O O K III.

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FABLE I.

The Red breast and the Sparrow.

AS a Red-breast was singing on a tree by the side of a rural cottage, a Sparrow perched upon the thatch took occasion thus to reprimand him: And dost thou, said he, with thy dull autumnal note, presume to emulate the *Birds of Spring*? Can thy weak warblings pretend to vie with the sprightly accents of the Thrush and the Black-bird? with the various melody of the Lark or the Nightingale? whom other birds, far thy superiors, have been long content to admire

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admire in silence. Judge with candour at least, replied the Robin; nor impute those efforts to ambition solely, which may sometimes flow from *Love of the Art*. I reverence indeed, but by no means envy, the birds whose fame has stood the test of ages. Their songs have charmed both hill and dale; but their season is past, and their throats are silent. I feel not however, the ambition to surpass or equal them: my efforts are of a much humbler nature; and I may surely hope for pardon, while I endeavour to cheer these forsaken valleys, by an attempt to *imitate the strains I love*.

F A B L E II.

The two Bees.

ON a fine Morning in May, two Bees set forward in quest of honey; the one wise and temperate, the other careless and extravagant. They soon arrived at a garden enriched with aromatic herbs, the most fragrant flowers, and the most delicious fruits. They regaled themselves for a time on the various dainties that were spread before them: the one loading his thigh at intervals with provisions

ORIGINAL FABLES. 135

sions for the hive against the distant winter ; the other, revelling in sweets without regard to any thing but his present gratification. At length they found a wide-mouthed phial, that hung beneath the bough of a peach-tree, filled with honey ready tempered, and exposed to their taste in the most alluring manner. The thoughtless *Epicure*, spite of all his friend's remonstrances, plunged headlong into the vessel, resolving to indulge himself in all the pleasures of sensuality. The *Philosopher*, on the other hand, sipped a little with caution, but being suspicious of danger, flew off to fruits and flowers ; where by the moderation of his meals he improved his relish for the true enjoyment of them. In the evening, however, he called upon his friend, to enquire whether he would return to the hive ; but found him surfeited in sweets, which he was as unable to leave, as to enjoy. Clogged in his wings, enfeebled in his feet, and his whole frame totally enervated, he was but just able to bid his friend adieu, and to lament with his latest breath, that though a taste of pleasure might quicken the relish of life, an unrestrained indulgence is inevitable destruction.

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F A B L E III.

The Diamond and the Glow-worm.

A DIAMOND happened to fall from the solitaire of a young lady, as she was walking one evening on a terrace in the garden. A Glow-worm who had beheld it sparkle in its descent, soon as the gloom of night had eclipsed its lustre, began to mock and to insult it. Art thou that wonderous thing, that vauntest of thy prodigious brightness? Where now is all thy boasted brilliancy? Alas, in evil hour has fortune thrown thee within the reach of my superior blaze. Conceited insect, replied the Gem, that owest thy feeble glimmer to the darkness that surrounds thee: know, my lustre bears the test of day, and even derives its chief advantage from that distinguishing light, which discovers thee to be no more than a dark and paltry Worm.

F A B L E

FABLE IV.

The Ostrich and the Pelican.

THE Ostrich one day met the Pelican, and observing her breast all bloody, Good God! says she to her, what is the matter? What accident has befallen you? You certainly have been seized by some savage beast of prey, and have with difficulty escaped from his merciless claws. Do not be surprised, friend, replied the Pelican: no such accident, nor indeed any thing more than common, hath happened to me. I have only been engaged in my ordinary employment of tending my nest, of feeding my dear little ones, and nourishing them with the vital blood from my bosom. Your answer, returned the Ostrich, astonishes me still more than the horrid figure you make. What! is this your practice, to tear your own flesh, to spill your own blood, and to sacrifice yourself in this cruel manner to the important cravings of your young ones? I know not which to pity most, your misery, or your folly. Be advised by me; have some regard for yourself; and leave off this barbarous custom of mangling your own body:

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body: as for your children, commit them to the care of providence, and make yourself quite easy about them. My example may be of use to you. I lay my eggs upon the ground, and just cover them lightly over with sand: if they have the good luck to escape being crushed by the tread of man or beast, the warmth of the sun broods upon, and hatches them; and in due time my young ones come forth: I leave them to be nursed by nature, and fostered by the elements; I give myself no trouble about them, and I neither know nor care what becomes of them. Unhappy wretch, says the Pelican, who art hardened against thy offspring, and thro' want of natural affection renderest thy travail fruitless to thyself! who knowest not the sweets of a parent's anxiety, the tender delight of a mother's sufferings! It is not I, but thou that art cruel to thy own flesh. Thy insensibility may exempt thee from a temporary inconvenience, and an inconsiderable pain; but at the same time it makes thee inattentive to a most necessary duty, and incapable of relishing the pleasure that attends it: a pleasure, the most exquisite that nature hath indulged to us; in which pain itself is swallowed up and lost, or only serves to heighten the enjoyment.

F A B L E

FABLE V.

The Hounds in Couples.

A HUNTS MAN was leading forth his Hounds one morning to the chace, and had linked several of the young Dogs in Couples, to prevent their following every scent, and hunting disorderly, as their own inclinations and fancy should direct them. Among others, it was the fate of Jowler and Vixen to be thus yoked together. Jowler and Vixen were both young and unexperienced; but had for some time been constant companions, and seemed to have entertained a great fondness for each other; they used to be perpetually playing together, and in any quarrel that happened, always took one another's part; it might have been expected therefore, that it would not be disagreeable to them to be still more closely united. However, in fact, it proved otherwise: they had not been long joined together before both parties were observed to express uneasiness at their present situation. Different inclinations and opposite wills began to discover and to exert themselves: if one chose to go
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this way, the other was as eager to take the contrary; if one was pressing forward, the other was sure to lag behind; Vixen pulled back Jowler, and Jowler dragged along Vixen: Jowler growled at Vixen, and Vixen snapped at Jowler: till at last it came to a downright quarrel between them; and Jowler treated Vixen in a very rough and ungenerous manner, without any regard to the inferiority of her strength, or the tenderness of her sex. As they were thus continually vexing and tormenting one another, an old Hound, who had observed all that passed, came up to them, and thus reproved them: "What a couple of silly Puppies you are, to be perpetually worrying yourselves at this rate! What hinders your going on peaceably and quietly together? Cannot you compromise the matter between you by each consulting the other's inclination a little? at least, try to make a virtue of necessity, and submit to what you cannot remedy: you cannot get rid of the chain, but you may make it fit easy upon you. I am an old dog, and let my age and experience instruct you: when I was in the same circumstances with you, I soon found, that thwarting my companion was only tormenting myself; and my yoke-fellow happily

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pily came into the same way of thinking. We endeavoured to join in the same pursuits, and to follow one another's inclinations; and so we jogged on together, not only with ease and quiet, but with comfort and pleasure. We found by experience, that mutual compliance not only compensates for liberty, but is even attended with a satisfaction and delight, beyond what liberty itself can give."

F A B L E VI.

The Miser and the Magpye.

AS a Miser sat at his desk, counting over his heaps of gold, a Magpye, eloping from his cage, picked up a guinea, and hopped away with it. The Miser, who never failed to count his money over a second time, immediately missed the piece, and rising up from his seat in the utmost consternation, observed the felon hiding it in a crevice of the floor. And art thou, cried he, that worst of thieves, who hast robbed me of my gold, without the plea of necessity, and without regard to its proper use? but thy life shall atone for so preposterous a villainy. Soft words, good master, quoth

quoth the Magpye. Have I then injured you, in any other sense than you defraud the public? and am I not using your money in the same manner you do yourself? If I must lose my life for hiding a single guinea, what do you, I pray, deserve, who secrete so many thousands?

F A B L E VII.

The Sensitive-Plant and the Thistle.

A THISTLE happened to spring up very near to a Sensitive-Plant. The former observing the extreme bashfulness and delicacy of the latter, addressed her in the following manner. Why are you so modest and reserved, my good neighbour, as to withdraw your leaves at the approach of strangers? Why do you shrink as if you were afraid, from the touch of every hand? Take example and advice from me: If I liked not their familiarity, I would make them keep their distance, nor should any saucy finger provoke me unrevenged. Our tempers and qualities, replied the other, are widely different: I have neither the ability nor inclination to give offence: you, it seems, are by no means destitute of

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of either. My desire is to live peaceably in the station wherein I was placed : and tho' my humility may now and then cause me a moment's uneasiness, it tends on the whole to preserve my tranquillity. The case is otherwise with you, whose irritable temper, and revengeful disposition, will probably, one time or other, be the cause of your destruction. While they were thus arguing the point, the Gardener came with his little spaddle, in order to lighten the earth round the stem of the Sensitive-Plant ; but perceiving the Thistle, he thrusts his instrument thro' the root of it, and tossed it out of his garden.

F A B L E VIII.

The Poet and the Death-watch.

AS a poet sat in his closet, feasting his imagination on the hopes of fame and immortality, he was startled on a sudden with the ominous sound of a Death-watch. However, immediately recollecting himself—Vain insect, said he, cease thy impertinent forebodings, sufficient indeed to frighten the weakness of women or of children ; but far beneath the
notice

notice of a Poet and Philosopher. As for me, whatever accident may threaten my life; my fame, spite of thy prognostics, shall live to future ages. It may be so, replied the insect: I find at least, thou hadst rather listen to the Maggot in thy head, than to the Worm beneath thy table: but know, that the suggestions of vanity are altogether as deceitful as those of superstition.

F A B L E IX.

Pythagoras and the Critic.

PYTHAGORAS was one day very earnestly engaged in taking an exact measure of the length of the Olympic course. One of those conceited Critics who aim at every thing, and are ready to interpose with their opinion upon all subjects, happened to be present; and could not help smiling to himself to see the Philosopher so employed, and to observe what great attention and pains he bestowed upon such a business. And pray, says he, accosting Pythagoras, may I presume to ask with what design you have given yourself this trouble? Of that, replied the Philosopher, I shall very readily inform you. We are assured, that

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Hercules, when he instituted the Olympic games, himself laid out this course by measure, and determined it to the length of six hundred feet, measuring it by the standard of his own foot. Now by taking an exact measure of this space, and seeing how much it exceeds the measure of the same number of feet now in use, we can find how much the foot of Hercules, and in proportion his whole stature, exceeded that of the present generation. A very curious speculation, says the Critic, and of great use and importance, no doubt! And so you will demonstrate to us, that the bulk of this fabulous hero was equal to his extravagant enterprises and his marvellous exploits. And pray, Sir, what may be the result of your enquiry at last? I suppose, you can now tell me exactly to a hair's breadth, how tall Hercules was. The result of my enquiry, replied the Philosopher, is this; and it is a conclusion of greater use and importance than you seem to expect from it; that if you will always estimate the labours of the philosopher, the designs of the patriot, and the actions of the hero, by the standard of your own narrow conceptions, you will ever be greatly mistaken in your judgment concerning them.

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FABLE

F A B L E X.

The Bear.

A BEAR, who was bred in the savage deserts of Siberia, had an inclination to see the world. He travelled from forest to forest, and from one kingdom to another, making many profound observations in his way. Among the rest of his excursions, he came by accident into a farmer's yard, where he saw a number of poultry standing to drink by the side of a pool. Observing that at every sip they turned up their heads towards the sky, he could not forbear enquiring the reason of so peculiar a ceremony. They told him, that it was by way of returning thanks to heaven for the benefits they received ; and was indeed an ancient and religious custom, which they could not, with a safe conscience, or without impiety, omit. Here the Bear burst into a fit of laughter, at once mimicking their gestures, and ridiculing their superstition, in the most contemptuous manner. On this, the Cock, with a spirit suitable to the boldness of his character, addressed him in the following words :

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As you are a stranger, Sir, you perhaps may be excused the indecency of this behaviour; yet give me leave to tell you, that none but a Bear would ridicule any religious ceremonies whatsoever, in the presence of those who believe them of importance.

F A B L E XI.

The Stork and the Crow.

A STORK and a Crow had once a strong contention, which of them stood highest in the favour of Jupiter. The Crow alledged his skill in omens, his infallibility in prophecies, and his great use to the priests of that deity in all their sacrifices and religious ceremonies. The Stork urged only his blameless life, the care he took to preserve his offspring, and the assistance he lent his parents under the infirmities of age. It happened, as it generally does in religious disputes, that neither of them could confute the other; so they both agreed to refer the decision to Jupiter himself. On their joint application, the god determined thus between them: Let none of my creatures despair of my regard; I know their weakness;

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I pity their errors; and whatever is well meant, I accept as it was intended. Yet sacrifices or ceremonies are in themselves of no importance, and every attempt to penetrate the counsels of the gods is altogether as vain as it is presumptuous: but he who pays to Jupiter a just honour and reverence, who leads the most temperate life, and who does the most good in proportion to his abilities; as he best answers the end of his creation, will assuredly stand highest in the favour of his Creator.

F A B L E XII.

Echo and the Owl.

THE vain hear the flatteries of their own imagination, and fancy them to be the voice of fame.

A solemn Owl, puffed up with vanity, fate repeating her screams at midnight, from the hollow of a blasted oak. And whence, cried she, proceeds this awful silence, unless it be to favour my superior melody? Surely the groves are hush'd in expectation of my voice, and when I sing, all nature listens. An Echo resounding from an adjacent rock, replied immediately,

Line 248.



13. Prometheus



*10. The ...
& the ...*



*19. The ...
and the ...*



*22. The ...
Shout*



13. Prometheus.



14. Momus.



15. the Butterfly,
& the Snail.



16. the Sunflower
& the Sunflower.



17. The Macaque
& the Raven.



18. the Diamond
& the Loadstone.



19. The Boy
and the Bottle.



20. the Monster
in the Sun.



21. The Two-tailed
Bee.



22. The Snipe
Shooter.



23. the Hanger
and his Dog.



24. the Sun
& the Vapour.

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mediately, "all nature listens." The Nightingale, resumed she, has *usurped* the sovereignty by night: her note indeed is musical, but mine is sweeter far. The voice confirming her opinion, replied again, "is sweeter far." Why then am I diffident, continued she, why do I fear to join the tuneful choir? The Echo still flattering her vanity, repeated, "join the tuneful choir." Roused by this empty phantom of encouragement, she on the morrow mingled her hootings with the harmony of the groves. But the tuneful songsters, disgusted with her noise, and affronted by her impudence, unanimously drove her from their society, and still continue to pursue her wherever she appears.

F A B L E XIII.

Prometheus.

PROMETHEUS formed man of the finest clay, and animated his work with fire stolen from heaven. He endowed him with all the faculties that are to be found amongst the animal creation: he gave him the courage of the lion, the subtlety of the fox, the pro-

vidence of the ant, and the industry of the bee; and he enabled him, by the superiority of his understanding, to subdue them all, and to make them subservient to his use and pleasure. He discovered to him the metals hidden in the bowels of the earth, and shewed him their several uses. He instructed him in every thing that might tend to cultivate and civilize human life; he taught him to till the ground, and to improve the fertility of nature; to build houses, to cover himself with garments, and to defend himself against the inclemencies of the air and the seasons; to compound medicines of salutary herbs, to heal wounds, and to cure diseases; to construct ships, to cross the seas, and to communicate to every country the riches of all. In a word, he endued him with sense and memory, with sagacity and invention, with art and science; and to crown all, he gave him an insight into futurity. But, alas! this latter gift, instead of improving, wholly destroyed the proper effect of all the former. Furnished with all the means and instruments of happiness, man nevertheless was miserable: through the knowledge and dread of future evil, he was incapable of enjoying present good. Prometheus saw, and immediately resolved to remedy this inconvenience;

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venience: he effectually restored man to a capacity of happiness, by depriving him of *prescience*, and giving him *hope* in its stead.

F A B L E XIV.

Momus.

TIS said that Momus was perpetually blaming and ridiculing whatever he saw. Even the works of the gods themselves could not escape his universal censure. The eyes of the bull, he said, were so placed by Jupiter, that they could not direct his horns in pushing at his enemies. The houses which Minerva had instructed men to build, were contrived so very injudiciously, that they could not be removed from a bad neighbourhood, nor from any other inconvenience. In short, the frame of man himself was in his opinion extremely defective; having no window in his bosom that might demonstrate his sincerity, or betray his wicked purposes, and prevent their execution. These and many other faults were found in the productions of nature; but when he surveyed the works of art, there was no end of his altercations. Jupiter, being resolved to

try how far his malice would proceed, sent his daughter Venus to desire that he would give his opinion of her beauty. She appeared accordingly before the churlish god, trembling at the apprehension of his known severity. He examined her proportions with all the rigour of an envious critic. But her shape and complexion were so striking, and her smiles and graces so very engaging, that he found it impossible to give the least colour to any objection he could make. Yet to shew how hard malevolence will struggle for a cavil; as she was retiring from his presence, he begged she would acquaint her father, that whatever grace might be in her motion, yet,—*her slippers were too noisy.*

FABLE XV.

The Butterfly, the Snail, and the Bee.

ABUTTERFLY, proudly perched on the gaudy leaves of a French marygold, was boasting the vast extent and variety of his travels. I have ranged, said he, over the graceful and majestic scenes of * *Hagley*, and

* Lord Lyttleton's.

have feasted my eyes with elegance and variety at * *The Leafwres*. I have wandered thro' regions of Eglantine and Honey-suckle, I have revelled in kisses on beds of Violets and Cowslips, and have enjoyed the delicious fragrance of Roses and Carnations. In short, my fancy unbounded, and my flight unrestrained, I have visited with perfect freedom all the flowers of the field or garden, and must be allowed to *know the world* in a superlative degree.

A snail, who hung attentive to his wonders on a cabbage-leaf, was struck with admiration; and concluded him, from all his experience, to be the wisest of animal creatures.

It happened that a Bee pursued her occupation on a neighbouring bed of majoram, and having heard our ostentatious vagrant, reprimanded him in this manner. Vain, empty flutterer, said she, whom instruction cannot improve, nor experience itself enlighten! Thou hast rambled over the world; wherein does thy knowledge of it consist? Thou hast seen variety of objects; what conclusions hast thou drawn from them? Thou hast tasted of every amusement; hast thou extracted any thing for use? I too am a traveller: go and look into my

* Mr. Shenstone's,

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hive; and let my treasures intimate to thee, that the end of travelling is to collect materials either for the use and emolument of private life, or for the advantage of the community.

F A B L E XVI.

The Tuberoſe and the Sun-flower.

A TUBEROSE in a bow-window on the north-side of a stately villa, addressed a Sun-flower which grew on a slope that was contiguous to the house. Pray, neighbour, says he, to what purpose do you pay all this devotion to that fictitious deity of yours, the Sun? Why are you still distorting your body, and casting up your eyes to that glaring luminary? What superstition induces you to think, that we flowers exist only through his influence? Both you and I am surely indebted to the hot-bed, and to the diligence of the gardener, for our production and support. For my part, I shall reserve my homage, together with my sweets, for that benevolent master who is continually watering and refreshing me: nor do I desire ever to see the face of that Sun you so vainly idolize, while I can enjoy the cool shade of this magnificent saloon. Truce with thy
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ORIGINAL FABLES. 155

blasphemies, replied the Sun-flower: why dost thou revile that glorious being, who dispenses life and vigour, not only to us, but to every part of the creation? Without this, alas! how ineffectual were the skill and vigilance of thy boasted master, either to support thy tender frame; or even to preserve his own! But this must ever be the case with such contracted understandings: sufficient, indeed, to point out our more immediate benefactors, but disregarding the original source from which *all* beneficence proceeds.

F A B L E XVII.

The Magpye and the Raven.

THERE was a certain Magpye, more busy and more loquacious than any of his tribe. His tongue was in perpetual motion, and himself continually upon the wing; fluttering from place to place, and very seldom appearing twice together in the same company.

Sometimes you saw him with a flock of pigeons, plundering a field of new-sown corn; now perched upon a cherry-tree with a parcel of tom-tits: the next moment, you would be

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surprised to find the same individual bird engaged with a flight of crows, and feasting upon a carcase.

He took it one day into his head to visit an old Raven, who lived retired among the branches of a venerable oak; and there, at the foot of a lonely mountain, had past near half-a-century.

I admire, says the prating-bird, your most romantic situation, and the wildness of these rocks and precipices around you: I am absolutely transported with the murmur of that water-fall; methinks it diffuses a tranquillity surpassing all the joys of public life. What an agreeable sequestration from worldly bustle and impertinence! what an opportunity of contemplating the divine beauties of nature! I shall most certainly quit the gaieties of town, and for the sake of these rural scenes, and my good friend's conversation, pass the remainder of my days in the solitude he has chosen.

Well, Sir, replies the Raven, I shall be at all times glad to receive you in my old-fashioned way; but you and I should certainly prove most unsuitable companions. Your whole ambition is to shine in company, and to recommend yourself to the world by universal complaisance: whereas my greatest happiness consists

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consists in ease and privacy, and the select conversation of a few whom I esteem. I prefer a good heart to the most voluble tongue; and though much obliged to you for the politeness of your professions, yet I see your benevolence divided among so numerous an acquaintance, that a very slender share of it can remain for those you are pleased to honour with the name of friends.

F A B L E XVIII.

The Diamond and the Loadstone

A DIAMOND of great beauty and lustre, observing not only many other gems of a lower class ranged together with him in the same cabinet, but a Loadstone likewise placed not far from him, began to question the latter how he came there; and what pretensions he had to be ranked among the precious stones: he, who appeared to be no better than a mere flint; a sorry, coarse, rusty-looking pebble; without any the least shining quality to advance him to such an honour; and concluded with desiring him to keep his distance, and pay a proper respect to his superiors. I find, said the Loadstone, you judge by external appearances;

pearances; and it is your interest, that others should form their judgment by the same rule. I must own I have nothing to boast of in that respect; but I may venture to say, that I make amends for my outward defects, by my inward qualities. The great improvement of navigation in these latter ages is intirely owing to me. It is owing to me, that the distant parts of the world are known and accessible to each other; that the remotest nations are connected together, and all in a manner united into one common society; that by a mutual intercourse they relieve one another's wants, and all enjoy the several blessings peculiar to each. Great Britain is indebted to me for her wealth, her splendor, and her power; and the arts and sciences are in a great measure obliged to me for their late improvements, and their continual increase. I am willing to allow you your due praise in its full extent; you are a very pretty bawble; I am mightily delighted to see you glitter and sparkle; I look upon you with pleasure and surprise: but I must be convinced that you are of some sort of use, before I acknowledge that you have any real merit, or treat you with that respect which you seem to demand.

FABLE

F A B L E XIX.

The Boy and the Nettle.

A LITTLE Boy playing in the fields, chanced to be stung by a Nettle, and came crying to his father: he told him, he had been hurt by that nasty weed several times before; that he was always afraid of it; and that now he did but just touch it, as lightly as possible, when he was so severely stung. Child, says he, your touching it so gently and timorously is the very *reason* of its hurting you. A Nettle may be handled safely, if you do it with courage and resolution; if you seize it boldly and gripe it fast, be assured it will never sting you: and you will meet with many sorts of persons, as well as things in the world, which ought to be treated in the very same manner.

F A B L E

F A B L E XX.

The Monster in the Sun.

AN Astronomer was observing the Sun thro' a telescope, in order to take an exact draught of the several spots which appear upon the face of it. While he was intent upon his observations, he was on a sudden surpris'd with a new and astonishing appearance; a large portion of the surface of the Sun was at once covered by a Monster of enormous size, and horrible form; it had an immense pair of wings, a great number of legs, and a long and vast proboscis; and that it was alive, was very apparent, from its quick and violent motions, which the observer could from time to time plainly perceive. Being sure of the fact (for how could he be mistaken in what he saw so clearly?) our Philosopher began to draw many surpris'ing conclusions from premises so well established. He calculated the magnitude of this extraordinary animal; and found that he covered about two square degrees of the Sun's surface; that placed upon the earth he would spread over half one hemisphere

sphere of it ; and that he was seven or eight times as big as the moon. But what was most astonishing, was the prodigious heat that he must endure : it was plain that he was something of the nature of the salamander, but of a far more fiery temperament ; for it was demonstrable from the clearest principles, that in his present situation he must have acquired a degree of heat two thousand times exceeding that of red-hot iron. It was a problem worth considering, whether he subsisted upon the gross vapours of the Sun, and so from time to time cleared away those spots which they are perpetually forming, and which would otherwise wholly obscure and incrustate its face ; or whether it might not feed on the solid substance of the orb itself, which by this means, together with the constant expence of light, must soon be exhausted and consumed ; or whether he was not now and then supplied by the falling of some excentric Comet into the Sun. However this might be, he found by computation that the earth would be but short allowance for him for a few months : and farther, it was no improbable conjecture, that as the earth was destined to be destroyed by fire, this fiery flying Monster would remove hither
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at the appointed time, and might much more easily and conveniently effect a conflagration, than any Comet, hitherto provided for that service. In the earnest pursuit of these, and many the like deep and curious speculations, the Astronomer was engaged, and was preparing to communicate them to the public. In the mean time, the discovery began to be much talked of; and all the *virtuosi* gathered together to see so strange a sight. They were equally convinced of the accuracy of the observation, and of the conclusions so clearly deduced from it. At last, one, more cautious than the rest, was resolved, before he gave a full assent to the report of his senses, to examine the whole process of the affair, and all the parts of the instrument; he opened the Telescope, and behold! a small fly was inclosed in it, which having settled on the center of the object-glass, had given occasion to all this marvellous Theory.

How often do men, through prejudice and passion, through envy and malice, fix upon the brightest and most exalted character the grossest and most improbable imputations. It behoves us upon such occasions to be upon our guard,

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guard, and to suspend our judgments; the fault perhaps is not in the *object*, but in the *mind* of the observer.

F A B L E XXI.

The discontented Bee.

A BEE complained to Jupiter, of the numerous evils to which her condition was exposed. Her body, she said, was weak and feeble, yet was she condemned to get her living by perpetual toil; she was benumbed by the cold of winter, and relaxed by the heat of summer. Her haunts were infested with poisonous weeds, and her flights obstructed by storms and tempests. In short, what with dangers from without, and diseases from within, her life was rendered one continual scene of anxiety and wretchedness. Behold now, said Jupiter, the frowardness and folly of this unthankful race! The flowers of the field I have spread before them as a feast, and have endeavoured to regale them with an endless variety. They now revel on odoriferous beds of thyme and lavender, and now on the still more fragrant banks of violets and roses. The business

ness they complain of is the extraction of honey; and, to alleviate their toil, I have allowed them wings, which readily transport them from one banquet to another. Storms, tempests, and noxious weeds, I have given them sagacity to shun; and if they are misled, 'tis through the perverseness of their inclinations. But thus it is with Bees, and thus with Men: they misconstrue the benevolence of my designs, and then complain that my decrees are rigid: they ungratefully overlook all the advantages, and magnify all the inconveniencies of their stations. But let my creatures pursue their happiness through the paths marked out by nature; and they will then feel no pains which they have not pleasures to compensate.

F A B L E XXII.

The Snipe Shooter.

AS a sportsman ranged the fields with his gun, attended by an experienced old Spaniel, he happened to spring a Snipe; and almost at the same instant, a covey of Partridges. Surprised at the accident, and divided

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ded in his aim, he let fly too indeterminately, and by this means missed them *both*. Ah, my good master, said the Spaniel, you should never have two aims at once. Had you not been dazzled and seduced by the luxurious hope of Partridge, you would most probably have secured your Snipe.

F A B L E XXIII.

The Beggar and his Dog.

A BEGGAR and his Dog sat at the gate of a noble Courtier, and was preparing to make a meal on a bowl of fragments from the Kitchen-maid. A poor Dependant of his Lordship's, who had been sharing the singular favour of a dinner at the steward's table, was struck with the appearance, and stopped a little to observe them. The Beggar, hungry and voracious as any Courtier in Christendom, seized with greediness the choicest morsels, and swallowed them himself; the residue was divided into portions for his children. A scrag was thrust into one pocket for honest Jack, a crust into another for bashful Tom, and a luncheon of cheese was wrapt up with care for the little favourite

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favourite of his hopeful family. In short, if any thing was thrown to the Dog, it was a bone so closely picked, that it scarce afforded a pittance to keep life and soul together. How exactly alike, said the Dependant, is this poor Dog's case and mine ! He is watching for a dinner from a master who cannot spare it ; I for a place from a needy Lord, whose wants perhaps are greater than my own : and whose relations more clamorous than any of this Beggar's brats. Shrewdly was it said by an ingenious writer, *a Courtier's Dependant is a Beggar's Dog.*

F A B L E XXIV.

The Sun and the Vapour.

IN the evening of a summer's day, the Sun, as he descended behind the western hills, beheld a thick and unwholesome Vapour extending itself over the whole face of the valleys. Every shrub and every flower immediately folded up its leaves, and shrunk from the touch of this detested enemy. Well hast thou chosen, said the God of day, this the hour of my departure, to spread thy pestilential

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25 Love and Folly



28 The Sun and the Vapour



31 The Sun and the Vapour



34 The Sun and the Vapour



25 Love and
Folly.



26 The
Eclipse.



27 The Boy
and y Butterfly.



28 The Pond
& the Ephemerum.



29 The
Parrot.



30 The Fly in
St. Pauls Church.



31 The Elm tree
and the Vine.



32 The Saurustian
& the Rose tree.



33 The Sensitive
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35 The Tulip
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tal influence, and taint the beauties of the creation. Enjoy for a short space the notable triumphs of thy malignity. I shall return again with the morning, repair thy mischiefs, and put an end to thy existence. May the *Slanderer* in thy fate discern his own, and be warned to dread the return of *Truth*.

F A B L E XXV.

Love and Folly.

IN the most early state of things, and among the eldest of beings, existed that God, as the poets entitle him, or rather that Dæmon, as Plato calls him, whose name is Love. He was assisting to the father of the Gods, in reducing chaos into order, in establishing the harmony of the universe, and in regulating and putting in execution the laws, by which the operations of nature are performed, and the frame of the world subsists. Universal good seemed to be his only study, and he was the supreme delight both of Gods and men. But in process of time, among other disorders that arose in the universe, it appeared, that Love began to deviate very often from what had seemed till

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now to be his chief pursuit: he would raise frequent disturbances and confusion in the course of nature; though it was always under the pretence of maintaining order and agreement. It seems he had entered into a very intimate acquaintance with a person who had but lately made her appearance in the world. This person was Folly, the daughter of Pride and Ignorance. They were often together, and as often as they were, some mischief was sure to be the consequence. By degrees he introduced her into the heavens; where it was their great joy by various artifices to lead the Gods into such measures as involved them in many inconveniencies, and exposed them to much ridicule. They deluded them all in their turns, except Minerva, the only divinity that escaped their wiles. Even Jupiter himself was induced by them to take some steps not at all suitable to the dignity of his character. Folly had gotten the entire ascendant over her companion; however, she was resolved to make still more sure of him, and engross him wholly to herself: with this design she infused a certain intoxicating juice into his nectar, the effects of which were so powerful, that in the end it utterly deprived him of his sight. Love

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was too much prejudiced in her favour, to apprehend her to be the cause of his misfortune; nor indeed did he seem to be in the least sensible of his condition. But his mother Venus soon found it out: and in the excess of her grief and rage carried her complaint to Jupiter, conjuring him to punish the sorceress who had blinded her son. Jupiter, willing to clear the heavens of such troublesome company, called both parties before him, and inquired into their conduct. After a full hearing, he determined, that Folly should make some sort of reparation for the injury done to Love: and being resolved to punish both for the many irregularities which they had lately introduced, he condemned Love to wander about the earth, and ordered Folly to be his guide.

F A B L E XXVI.

The Eclipse.

ONE day when the Moon was under an Eclipse, she complained thus to the Sun of the discontinuance of his favours. My dearest friend, said she, why do you not shine upon me as you used to do? Do I not shine
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upon thee? said the Sun; I am very sure that I intend it. O no, replies the Moon, but I now perceive the reason. I see that dirty planet the Earth, is got between us.

The good influences of the great would perhaps be more diffusive, were it not for their mischievous dependants, who are so frequently suffered to interpose.

F A B L E XXVII.

The Boy and the Butterfly.

A BOY, greatly smitten with the colours of a Butterfly, pursued it from flower to flower with indefatigable pains. First he aimed to surprise it among the leaves of a rose; then to cover it with his hat, as it was feeding on a daisy; now hoped to secure it, as it rested on a sprig of myrtle; and now grew sure of his prize, perceiving it loiter on a bed of violets. But the fickle Fly, continually changing one blossom for another, still eluded his attempts. At length, observing it half buried in the cup of a tulip, he rushed forward, and snatching it with violence, crushed it

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it all to pieces. The dying insect, seeing the poor Boy somewhat chagrined at his disappointment, addressed him with all the calmness of a stoic, in the following manner.—Behold now the end of thy unprofitable solicitude! and learn, for the benefit of thy future life, that all pleasure is but a painted Butterfly; which, although it may serve to amuse thee in the pursuit, if embraced with too much ardour, will perish in thy grasp.

F A B L E XXVIII.

The Toad and the Ephemeron.

AS some workmen were digging marble in a mountain of Scythia, they discerned a Toad of an enormous size in the midst of a solid rock. They were very much surprised at so uncommon an appearance, and the more they considered the circumstances of it, the more their wonder increased. It was hard to conceive by what means this creature had preserved life and received nourishment in so narrow a prison; and still more difficult to account for his birth and existence in a place so totally inaccessible to all of his species. They

could conclude no other, than that he was formed together with the rock in which he had been bred, and was coeval with the mountain itself. While they were pursuing these speculations, the Toad sat swelling and bloating, till he was ready to burst with pride and self-importance; to which at last he thus gave vent:—Yes, says he, you behold in me a specimen of the Antediluvian race of animals. I was begotten before the flood; and who is there among the present upstart race of mortals, that shall dare to contend with me in nobility of birth, or dignity of character? An Ephemeron, sprung that morning from the river Hypanis, as he was flying about from place to place, chanced to be present, and observed all that passed with great attention and curiosity. Vain boaster, says he, what foundation hast thou for pride, either in thy descent, merely because it is ancient, or thy life, because it hath been long? What good qualities hast thou received from thy ancestors? Insignificant even to thyself, as well as useless to others, thou art almost as insensible as the block in which thou wast bred. Even I, that had my birth only from the scum of the neighbouring river, at the rising of this day's sun, and who shall

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shall die at its setting, have more reason to applaud my condition, than thou hast to be proud of thine. I have enjoyed the warmth of the sun, the light of the day, and the purity of the air: I have flown from stream to stream, from tree to tree, and from the plain to the mountain: I have provided for posterity, and shall leave behind me a numerous offspring to people the next age of to-morrow: in short, I have fulfilled all the ends of my being, and I have been happy. My whole life, 'tis true, is but of twelve hours: but even one hour of it is to be preferred to a thousand years of mere existence; which have been spent, like thine, in sloth, ignorance, and stupidity.

F A B L E XXIX.

The Peacock.

THE Peacock, who at first was distinguished only by a crest of feathers, preferred a petition to Juno that he might be honoured also with a train. As the bird was a particular favourite, Juno readily enough assented; and his train was ordered to surpass that of every fowl in the creation. The Mi-

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nion, conscious of his superb appearance, thought it requisite to assume a proportionable dignity of gait and manners. The common poultry of the farm-yard were quite astonished at his magnificence; and even the pheasants themselves beheld him with an eye of envy. But when he attempted to *fly*, he perceived himself to have sacrificed all his *activity* to *ostentation*; and that he was encumbered by the pomp in which he placed his glory.

F A B L E XXX.

The Fly in St. Paul's Cupola.

AS a Fly was crawling leisurely up one of the columns of St. Paul's Cupola, she often stopped, surveyed, examined, and at last broke forth into the following exclamation. Strange! that any one who pretended to be an artist, should ever leave so superb a structure, with so many roughnesses unpolished! Ah, my friend! said a very *learned architect*, who hung in his *web* under one of the capitals, you should never decide of things beyond the extent of your capacity. This lofty building was not erected for such diminutive animals as you or I; but for a certain

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certain sort of creatures, who are at least ten thousand times as large: to their eyes, it is very possible, these columns may seem as smooth, as to you appear the wings of your favourite Mistress.

F A B L E XXXI.

The Elm-tree and the Vine.

AN extravagant young Vine, vainly ambitious of independency, and fond of rambling at large, despised the alliance of a stately Elm that grew near, and courted her embraces. Having risen to some small height without any kind of support, she shot forth her flimsy branches to a very uncommon and superfluous length; calling on her neighbour to take notice how little she wanted his assistance. Poor infatuated shrub, replied the Elm, how inconsistent is thy conduct! Wouldst thou be *truly* independent, thou shouldst carefully apply those juices to the enlargement of thy stem, which thou lavishest in vain upon unnecessary foliage; I shortly shall behold thee groveling on the ground; yet countenanced, indeed, by many of the human race, who, intoxicated with vanity, have despised œconomy; and who, to

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support for a moment their empty boast of independence, have exhausted the very source of it in frivolous expences.

F A B L E XXXII.

The Laurustinus and the Rose-tree.

IN the quarters of a shrubbery, where deciduous plants and ever-greens were intermingled with an air of negligence, it happened that a rose grew not far from a Laurustinus. The rose, enlivened by the breath of *June*, and attired in all its gorgeous blossoms, looked with much contempt on the Laurustinus; who had nothing to display but the dusky verdure of its leaves. What a wretched neighbour, cried she, is this! and how unworthy to partake the honour of my company! Better to bloom and die in the desert, than to associate myself here with such low and dirty vegetables. And is this my lot at last, whom every nation has agreed to honour, and every Poet conspired to reverence, as the undoubted sovereign of the field and garden? If I really am so, let my subjects at least keep their distance, and let a circle remain vacant round me, suitable to the

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the state my rank requires. Here, Gardener, bring thy hatchet; prithee cut down this Laurustinus; or at least remove it to its proper sphere. Be pacified, my lovely rose, replied the Gardener; enjoy thy *sovereignty* with moderation, and thou shalt receive all the homage which thy beauty can require. But remember that in winter, when neither thou nor any of thy tribe produce one flower or leaf to cheer me, this faithful shrub, which thou despisest, will become the glory of my garden. Prudence therefore as well as gratitude is concerned, in the protection of a friend, that will shew his *Friendship in adversity*.

F A B L E XXXIII.

The Sensitive Plant and the Palm-tree.

THE Sensitive Plant being brought out of the greenhouse on a fine summer's day, and placed in a beautiful grove adorned with the finest forest trees and the most curious plants, began to give himself great airs, and to treat all that were about him with much petulance and disdain. Lord! says he, how could the Gardener think of setting me among

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a parcel of Trees; gross, inanimate things, mere vegetables, and perfect stocks! Sure he does not take *me* for a common plant, when he knows, that I have the sense of feeling in a more exquisite degree than he has himself: It really shocks me to see into what wretched low company he has introduced me: 'tis more than the delicacy of my constitution, and the extreme tenderness of my nerves, can bear. Pray, Mrs. Acacia, stand a little farther off, and don't presume quite so much upon your idle pretence of being my cousin. Good Mr. Citron, keep your distance, I beseech you; your strong scent quite overpowers me. Friend Palm-tree, your offensive shade is really more than I am able to support. The lofty Palm-tree, as he was shooting up his head with the more vigour under the weight that was hung upon it, condescended to rebuke the impertinent creature in the following manner: Thou vegetable fribble! learn to know thyself, and thy own worthlessness and insignificance. Thou valuest thyself on a vicious softness, a false delicacy, the very defect and imbecility of thy nature. What art thou good for, that shrinkest at a touch, and droopest at a breath of air: feeble and barren, a perpetual torment

torment to thyself, and wholly useless to others. Whereas we, whom thou treatest with such disdain, make a grateful return to man for his care of us : some of us yield him fruit, others are serviceable to him by their strength and firmness ; we shade him from the heat of the sun, and we defend him from the violence of the winds ; I am particularly distinguished for my hardiness and perseverance, my steadiness and constancy : and on account of those very qualities which thou wantest and affectest to despise, have the honour to be made the emblem of conquest, and the reward of the conqueror.

F A B L E XXXIV.

The Tentyrites and the Ichneumon.

A CROCODILE of prodigious size, and uncommon fierceness, infested the banks of the Nile, and spread desolation through all the neighbouring country. He seized the shepherd together with the sheep, and devoured the herdsman as well as the cattle. Emboldened by success, and the terror which prevailed wherever he appeared, he ventured to carry his incursions even into the island of Tentyra, and to brave the people, who boast themselves

the only tamers of his race. The Tentyrites themselves were struck with horror, at the appearance of a monster so much more terrible than they had ever seen before: even the boldest of them dared not to attack him openly; and the most experienced long endeavoured with all their art and address to surprise him, but in vain. As they were consulting together, what they should do in these circumstances, an Ichneumon stepped forth, and thus addressed them. I perceive your distress, neighbours: and tho' I cannot assist you in the present difficulty, yet give me leave to offer you some advice that may be of use to you for the future. A little prudence is worth all your courage: it may be glorious to overcome a great evil, but the wisest way is to prevent it. You despise the Crocodile while he is small and weak; and do not sufficiently consider, that as he is a long-lived animal, so 'tis his peculiar property to grow as long as he lives. You see I am a poor, little, feeble creature; yet am I much more terrible to the Crocodile, and more useful to the country, than you are. I attack him in the egg; and while you are contriving for months together, how to get the better of one Crocodile, and all to no purpose, I effectually destroy fifty of them in a day.

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F A B L E XXXV.

The Tulip and the Rose.

A TULIP and a Rose happened to be near neighbours in the same garden. They were both indeed extremely beautiful; yet the Rose engaged considerably more than an equal share of the Gardener's attention. Enamoured, as in truth he was, of the delicious odour it diffused, he appeared, in the eye of the Tulip, to be always kissing and caressing it. The envy and jealousy of rival beauties are not easily to be concealed. The Tulip, vain of its external charms, and unable to bear the thought of being forsaken for another, remonstrated in these words against the Gardener's partiality. Why are my beauties thus neglected? Are not my colours more bright, more various, and more inviting, than any which that red-faced Thing has to display? Why then is she to engross your whole affection, and thus for ever to be preferred—Be not dissatisfied, my fair Tulip, said the Gardener, I acknowledge thy beauties, and admire them as they deserve. But there are
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found in my favourite Rose such attractive odours, such internal charms, that I enjoy a banquet in their fragrance, which no *mere* beauty can pretend to furnish.

F A B L E XXXVI.

The Woodcock and the Mallard.

A WOODCOCK and a Mallard were feeding together in some marshy ground at the tail of a mill-pond. Lard, says the squeamish Woodcock, in what a voracious and beastly manner do you devour all that comes before you! Neither snail, frog, toad, nor any kind of filth, can escape the fury of your enormous appetite. All alike goes down, without measure and without distinction—What an odious vice is *Gluttony*.

Good-lack! replied the Mallard, pray how came you to be my accuser? And whence has your excessive delicacy a right to censure my plain eating? Is it a crime to satisfy one's hunger? Or is it not indeed a virtue rather, to be pleased with the food which nature offers us? Surely I would sooner be charged

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with gluttony, than with that finical and sickly appetite, on which you are pleased to ground your superiority of *taste*.—What a silly vice is *Daintiness*.

Thus endeavouring to palliate their respective passions, our Epicures parted with a mutual contempt. The Mallard hasting to devour some garbage, which was in reality a *bait*, immediately gorged a hook thro' mere greediness, and oversight: while the Woodcock, flying through a glade, in order to seek his favourite juices, was entangled in a net, spread across it for that purpose; falling each of them a sacrifice to their *different*, but *equal*, foibles.

F A B L E XXXVII.

The two Trouts and the Gudgeon.

A FISHERMAN in the month of May stood angling on the banks of Thames with an artificial fly. He threw his bait with so much art, that a young Trout was rushing towards it, when she was prevented by her mother. Never, said she, my child, be too precipitate, where there is a possibility of danger.

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ger. Take due time to consider, before you risk an action that *may* be fatal. How know you whether yon appearance be *indeed* a fly, or the snare of an enemy? Let some one else make the experiment *before* you. If it be a fly, he very probably will elude the first attack: and the second may be made, if not with success, at least with safety.---She had no sooner uttered this caution, than a Gudgeon seized upon the pretended fly, and became an example to the giddy daughter, of the great importance of her mother's counsel.

F A B L E XXXVIII.

The Stars and the Sky-Rocket.

AS a Rocket, on a rejoicing night, ascended thro' the air, and observed the stream of light that distinguished his passage, he could not forbear exulting in his elevation, and calling upon the Stars to do him reverence. Behold, said he, what gazing multitudes admire the lustre of my train, whilst all your feeble sparks of light pass unobserved, or disregarded! The Stars heard his empty boast with a silent indignation: the Dog-Star only vouchsafed  answer

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answer him. How weak are they, said he, who value themselves on the voice of popular applause! 'Tis true, the novelty of thy appearance may procure to thee more admiration from vulgar minds than our daily splendors can attract, although indeed a lasting miracle. But do not estimate thy importance by the capricious fancy of ill-judging mortals. Know thyself to be but the gaudy pageant of a few moments, the transient gaze of a giddy and ignorant multitude. Even while I speak, thy blaze is half extinguished, and thou art at this instant sinking into perpetual oblivion. Whereas our fires were lighted up by heaven for the admiration, and advantage of the universe; and our glory shall endure for ever.

F A B L E XXXIX.

The Farmer and his three Enemies.

A WOLF, a Fox, and a Hare, happened one evening to be foraging in different parts of a Farmer's yard. Their first effort was pretty successful, and they returned in safety to their several quarters: however, not so happy as to be unperceived by the Farmer's watchful

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watchful eye ; who placing several kinds of snares, made each his prisoner in the next attempt. He first took the Hare to task, who confessed she had eaten a few turnip-tops, merely to satisfy her hunger : besought him pitteously to spare her life, and promised never to enter his grounds again. He then accosted the Fox, who in a fawning obsequious tone, protested that he came into his premises through no other motive than pure good-will, to restrain the Hares and other vermin from the plunder of his corn ; and that, whatever evil tongues might say, he had too great a regard both for him and for justice to be in the least capable of any dishonest action. He last of all examined the Wolf what business brought *him* within the purlicus of a Farmer's yard ? The Wolf very impudently declared, it was with a view of destroying his lambs, to which he had an undoubted right : that the Farmer himself was the only felon, who robbed the community of Wolves of what was meant to be their proper food. That this, at least, was his opinion ; and whatever fate attended him, he should not scruple to risque his life in the pursuit of his lawful prey.

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The Farmer having heard their pleas, determined the cause in the following manner. The Hare, said he, deserves compassion, for the penitence he shews, and the humble confession he has made : — As for the Fox and Wolf, let *them* be hanged *together* ; criminals alike with respect to the fact, they have alike heightened their equal guilt by the aggravations of hypocrisy and of impudence.

F A B L E XL.

The Snail and the Statue.

A STATUE of the *Medicean Venus* was erected in a grove sacred to beauty and the fine arts. Its modest attitude, its elegant proportions, assisted by the situation in which it was placed, attracted the regard of every delicate observer. — A Snail, who had fixed himself beneath the moulding of the pedestal, beheld with an evil eye the admiration it excited. Accordingly, watching his opportunity, he strove, by trailing his filthy slime over every limb and feature, to obliterate those beauties which he could not endure to hear so much applauded. An honest linnet, however, who
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observed him at his dirty work, took the freedom to assure him that he would infallibly lose his labour: For, although, said he, to an injudicious eye, thou may'st sully the perfections of this finished piece, yet a more accurate and close inspector will discover its beauty, through all the blemishes with which thou hast endeavoured to disguise it.

F A B L E XLI.

The Water-fall.

FROM the head of a narrow valley that is wholly overshadowed by the growth of trees, a large Cascade bursts forth with a luxuriance unexpected. First the current rushes down a precipice with headlong impetuosity; then dashed from rock to rock, and divided as it rolls along, by fragments of stone or trunks of trees, it assumes a milk-white appearance, and sparkles thro' the gloom. All is intricacy; all is profusion: and the tide, however ample, appears yet *more* considerable by the fantastic growth of roots that hide the limits of its channel. Thus bounding down from one descent to another, it no sooner gains the level, than it

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it sinks beneath the earth, and buries all its glory at our feet.

A spectator, privy to the scanty source which furnished out this grand appearance, stood one day in a musing posture, and began to moralize on its prodigality. Ah silly stream! said he, why wilt thou hasten to exhaust thy source, and thus wilfully incur the contempt that waits on poverty? Art thou ignorant that thy funds are by no means equal to this expence? Fear not, my kind adviser, replied the generous Cascade; the gratitude I owe my master, who collected my rills into a stream, induces me to entertain his friends in the best manner I am able; when *alone*, I act with more œconomy.

F A B L E XLII.

The Oak and the Sycamore.

A SYCAMORE grew beside an Oak; and being not a little elevated by the first warm days in spring, began to shoot forth his leaves apace, and to despise the naked Oak for *insensibility*, and *want of spirit*. The Oak, conscious
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of his superior nature, made this philosophical reply. Be not, my friend, so much delighted with the first precarious address of every fickle zephyr: consider, the frosts may yet return: and if thou covetest an equal share with me in all the glories of the rising year, do not afford them an opportunity to nip thy beauties in their bud. As for myself, I only wait to see this genial warmth a little confirmed: and, whenever that is the case, I shall perhaps display a majesty that will not easily be shaken. But the tree which appears too forward to exult in the first favourable glance of spring, will ever be the readiest to droop beneath the frowns of winter.

F A B L E XLIII.

The Wolf and the Shepherd's Dog.

A WOLF ranging over the forest, came within the borders of a sheep-walk; when meeting with a Shepherd's Dog, that with a surly sort of a growl, demanded his business there, he thought proper to put on as innocent an appearance as he *could*, and protested upon his *honour* that he meant not the least offence. I am afraid, said the Dog, the pledge
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of your *honour* is but a poor depofite for your *honesty*: you muft not take it amifs, if I object to the *Security*. No flur upon my reputation, replied the Wolf, I beg of you. My fenfe of honour is as delicate, as my great achievements are renowned. I would not leave a ftain upon my memory for the world. The fame of what are commonly called *great achievements* is very precious, to be fure, returned the Dog; almoft equal to the character of an excellent butcher, a gallant highwayman, or an expert affaffin. While the Dog was yet fpeaking, a lamb happened to ftay within reach of our hero. The temptation was ftronger than he was able to refift: He fprung upon his prey, and was fcouring haftily away with it. However, the Dog feized and held him, till the arrival of the Shepherd, who took meafures for his execution. Juft as he was going to difpatch him; I obferve, fays the Dog, that one of your noble *atchievements*, is the deftruction of the innocent. You are welcome to the renown, as you are alfo to the reward of it. As for me, I fhall prefer the credit of having *honestly defended* my mafter's property, to any fame you have acquired by thus *heroically invading* it.

FABLE

F A B L E XLIV.

The Mushroom and the Acorn.

AN Acorn fell from the top of an old venerable Oak full on the head of a Mushroom that unhappily sprung up beneath it. Wounded by the blow, the Mushroom complained of the incivility. Impertinent upstart, replied the Acorn, why didst thou, with familiar boldness, approach so near to thy superiors? Shall the wretched offsprings of a dunghill presume to raise its head on a spot *ennobled* by my ancestors for so many generations? I do not mean, returned the Mushroom, to dispute the honour of thy birth, or to put my own in competition with it; on the contrary, I must acknowledge that I hardly know from *whence* I sprung. But sure 'tis *merit*, and not mere ancestry, that obtains the regard of those whose approbation is truly valuable: I have *little* perhaps to boast, but surely thou who hast thus insulted me, canst have no pretence to boast *any*. I please the palates of mankind, and give a poignant flavour to their most elegant entertainments; while thou, with all the pride of thy ancestry, art fit only to fatten Hogs.

F A B L E

F A B L E XLV.

Wisdom and Cunning.

AS *Wisdom*, in the form of a beautiful young lady, was travelling along the road, it happened that she was benighted and lost her way. She had not however wandered far, when perceiving a light glimmer from a window at some distance, she endeavoured to direct her steps towards the house where it appeared. This proved to be no other than the miserable abode of *Selfishness*; who beneath the semblance of a churlish and close-fisted peasant, had long taken up his residence in this lonesome habitation. She knocked at the door, to enquire her way. The Lout opened it with caution; but, being immediately struck with the uncommon lustre of so fine a figure, he found his appetite awake, and became impatient for the gratification of it. *Wisdom*, on the other hand, feeling an utter detestation of him, would have willingly withdrawn herself; but alas! it was too late. He took advantage of her distress, seized, and forced her to his bed. Nine months afterwards she was delivered of a

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squint-eyed, fallow-faced imp, unto whom she could never be induced to shew any marks of natural affection. She would not even own him for her proper offspring; and he was put into the hands of *Dullness*, to be nursed and educated at her discretion. As he arrived to years of maturity, he was known by the name of *Cunning*. Some faint resemblance which he bore of his *Mother*, procured him a degree of respect among persons of small discernment; and he shewed somewhat of her address in regard to the means by which he gained his ends; but he had so much of the *Father*, as never to extend his aims to any truly noble or social atchievement.

F A B L E XLVI.

The Toad and the Gold-fish.

AS a Gold-fish, newly brought from the warm regions of the east, displayed his beauties in the sun; a Toad, who had long eyed him with no small degree of envy, broke out into this exclamation. How partial and how fantastic is the favour of mankind! regardless of every excellence that is obvious
and

and familiar; and only struck with what is imported from a distant climate at a large expence! What a pompous bason is here constructed, and what extreme fondness is here shewn for this insignificant stranger! While a *quadrupede* of my importance is neglected, shunned, and even persecuted. Surely, were I to appear in China, I should receive the same or perhaps greater honours than are lavished here upon this tinsel favourite.

The Gold-fish, conscious of his real beauty, and somewhat angry to be thus insulted by so very unsightly and deformed a creature, made this rational reply. It must be confessed, that the opinions of men are sometimes guided by the caprice you mention. Yet as for me and the rest of my tribe, it is well known that if we are admired in England, we are not less admired at home: being there esteemed by the greatest mandarins, fed by stated officers, and lodged in basons as superb as any your nation has to boast. Perhaps then, notwithstanding your sage remark, there are some virtues and some qualities that please and disgust almost universally; and as innocence joined to beauty seldom fails to procure esteem, so malice added to deformity will cause as general a detestation.

F A B L E XLVII.

The Hermit.

A CERTAIN Hermit had scooped his cave near the summit of a lofty mountain, from whence he had an opportunity of surveying a large extent both of sea and land. He sat one evening, contemplating with pleasure on the various objects that lay diffused before him. The woods were dressed in the brightest verdure; the thickets adorned with the gayest blossoms, The birds caroled beneath the branches; the lambs frolicked around the meads; the peasant whistled beside his team; and the ships, driven by gentle gales, were returning safely into their proper harbours. In short, the arrival of spring had doubly enlivened the whole scene before his eye; and every object yielded a display either of *beauty* or of *happiness*.

On a sudden arose a violent storm. The winds mustered all their fury, and whole forests of oak lay scattered on the ground. Darkness instantly succeeded; hail-stones and rain were
poured

ORIGINAL FABLES. 197

poured forth in cataracts, and lightening and thunder added horror to the gloom.

And now the sea, piled up in mountains, bore aloft the largest vessels, while the horrid uproar of its waves drowned the shrieks of the wretched mariners. When the whole tempest had exhausted its fury, it was instantly followed by the shock of an earthquake.

The poor inhabitants of a neighbouring village flocked in crowds to our Hermit's cave; religiously hoping, that his well-known sanctity would protect them in their distress. They were, however, not a little surprised at the profound tranquillity that appeared in his countenance. "My friends, said he, be not dismayed. Terrible to *me*, as well as to *you*, would have been the war of elements we have just beheld; but that I have meditated with so much attention on the various works of Providence, as to be persuaded that his *goodness* is equal to his *power*."

F A B L E XLVIII.

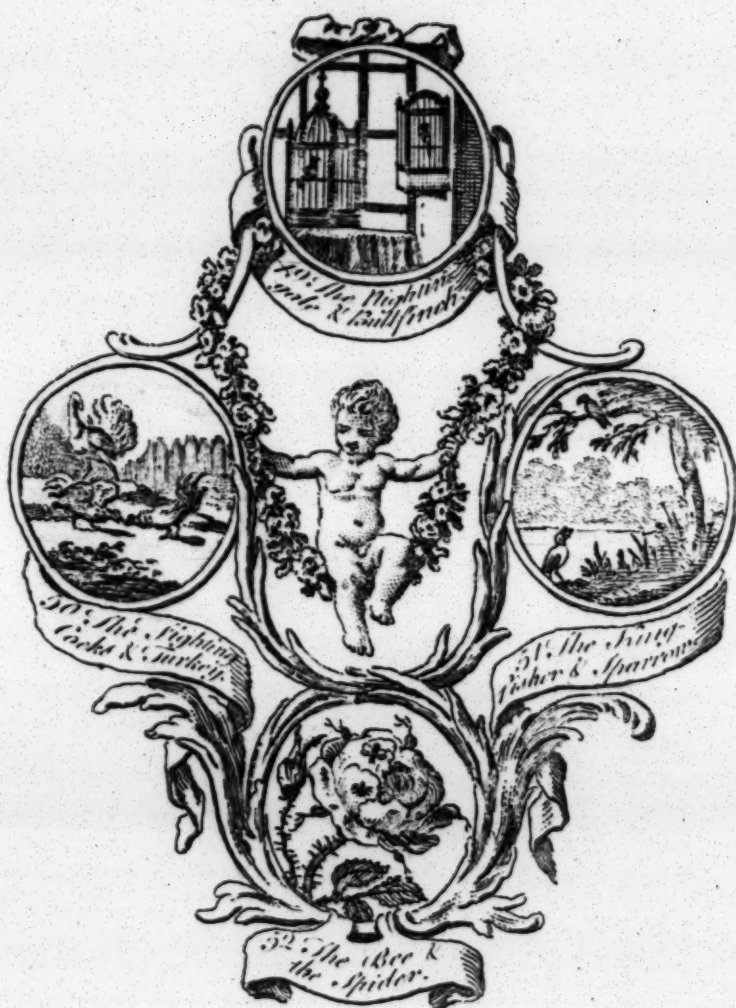
The Dove.

A DOVE that had a mate and young ones, happening to spy her cage door open, was driven by a sudden impulse to fly out into an adjacent grove. There, perched upon the bough of a sycamore, she sat as it were wrapt in deep contemplation; not recovering from her reverie, until the owner drew nigh unseen, and brought her back to her little family.

Art thou not ashamed then, says her mate, thus to desert thy helpless offspring? Art thou not base to abandon *me*, for the company of birds to whom thou art a stranger? Could I have harboured such a thought? I, who have been ever constant to our first engagement: and must have died of mere despair, hadst thou not returned to my embraces? But how, alas! returned! Not, as it seems, by choice; but insnared by dint of artifice, and brought hither by constraint.

Have patience, replied the rambler, and hear the plea of thy repentant mate. Witnesses

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all ye powers of wedlock, ye that know what passes in the hearts of Doves, if ever, before this unhappy moment, I felt a wish to part from thee! The door, so seldom open, allowed but one moment for deliberation, and I happened to decide amiss. When removed to yonder wood, the air of liberty breathed so sweet, that, with horror I speak it, I felt a suspense about returning to the cage. Pardon, I pray thee, this one crime, and be well assured I will never repeat it. And that thou may'st be the more induced to pardon me, know, that the love of liberty burns ever the strongest in the bosoms that are most open to conjugal affection and the love of young.

F A B L E XLIX.

The Nightingale and the Bullfinch.

A NIGHTINGALE and a Bullfinch occupied two cages in the same apartment. The Nightingale perpetually varied her song, and every effort she made afforded fresh entertainment. The Bullfinch always

whistled the same dull tune that he had learnt, till all the family grew weary of the disgustful repetition. What is the reason, said the Bullfinch one day to his neighbour, that your songs are always heard with peculiar attention, while mine, I observe, are almost as wholly disregarded? The reason, replied the Nightingale, is obvious; your audience are sufficiently acquainted with every note you have been taught, and they know your natural abilities too well to expect any thing new from *that quarter*. How then can you suppose they will listen to a songster, from whom nothing *native* or *original* is to be expected?

F A B L E L.

The Fighting Cocks and the Turkey.

TWO Cocks of the genuine game-breed met by chance upon the confines of their respective walks. To such *great* and *heroic* souls the smallest matter imaginable affords occasion for dispute. They approach each other with pride and indignation; they look defiance; they crow a challenge; and immediately commences

ORIGINAL FABLES. 201

mences a long and bloody battle. It was fought on both sides with so much courage and dexterity; they gave and received such deep and desperate wounds; that they both lay down upon the turf utterly spent, blinded, and disabled. While this was their situation, a Turkey, that had been a spectator of all that passed between them, drew near to the field of battle, and reproved them in this manner. "How foolish and absurd has been your quarrel, my good neighbours! A more ridiculous one could scarce have happened among the most contentious of all creatures, men. Because you have crowed perhaps in each other's hearing, or one of you has picked up a grain of corn upon the territories of his rival, you have both rendered yourselves miserable for the remainder of your days."

F A B L E L I.

The King-fisher and the Sparrow.

AS a King-fisher was sitting beneath the shade, upon the banks of a river, she was surpris'd on a sudden by the fluttering of a Sparrow that had eloped from the neighbour-

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ing town, to visit her. When the first compliments were over, "How is it possible, said the Sparrow, that a bird so finely adorned can think of spending all her days in the very depth of retirement! The golden plumage of your breast, the shining azure of your pinions, were never given you to be concealed, but to attract the wonder of beholders. Why then should you not endeavour to know the world, and be at the same time, yourself, both known and admired?" You are very complaisant at least, replied the King-fisher, to conclude that my being *admired*, would be the consequence of my being *known*. But it has sometimes been my lot, in the lonesome valleys that I frequent, to hear the complaints of *beauty* that has been neglected; and of *worth* that has been despised. Possibly it does not always happen, that even *superior excellence* is found to excite admiration, or to obtain encouragement. I have learned besides, not to build my happiness upon the opinion of others, so much as upon self-conviction, and the approbation of my own heart. Remember, I am a King-fisher; these woods and streams are my delight; and so long as they are free from winds and tempests, believe me, I am perfectly content with my situation.

Why

Why therefore should I court the noise and bustle of the world, which I find so little agreeable to my native disposition? It may be the joy of a Sparrow to indulge his curiosity, and to display his eloquence. I, for my part, love silence, privacy, and contemplation; and think that every one should consult the native bias of his temper, before he chooses the way of life in which he expects to meet with happiness.

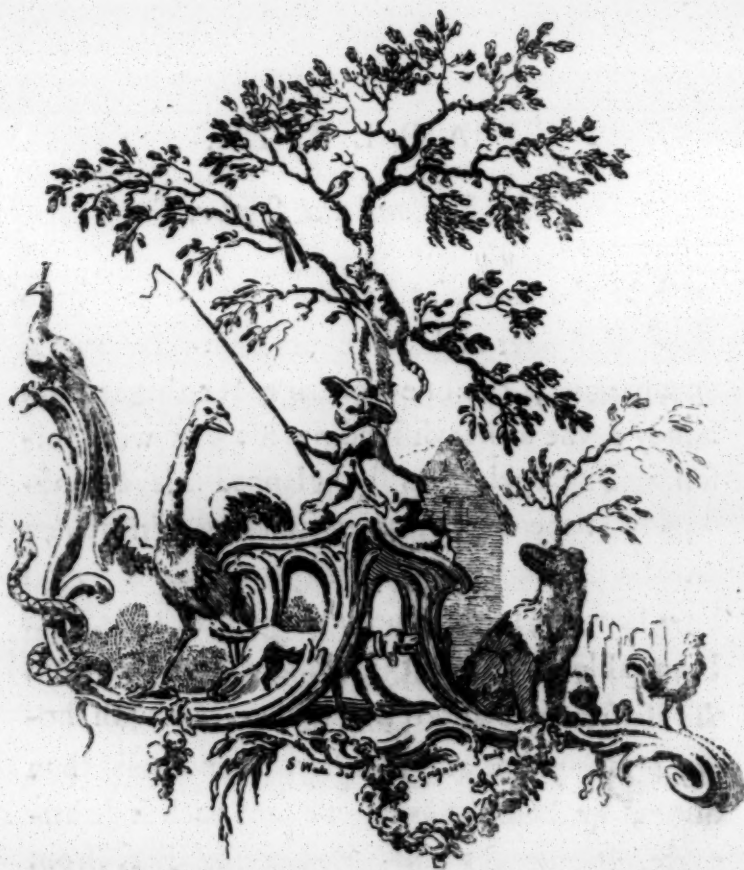
F A B L E LII.

The Bee and the Spider.

ON the leaves and flowers of the same shrub a Spider and a Bee pursued their several occupations; the one covering her thighs with honey; the other distending his bag with poison. The Spider, as he glanced his eye obliquely at the Bee, was ruminating with spleen on the superiority of her productions. And how happens it, said he, in a peevish tone, that I am able to collect nothing but poison from the self-same plant that supplies *thee* with honey? My pains and industry are not less than thine; in those respects we are each indefatigable. It proceeds only, replied the Bee, from

204 ORIGINAL FABLES.

the different disposition of our nature: mine gives a pleasing flavour to every thing I touch, whereas thine converts to poison, what by a different process had been the purest honey.



I N D E X

T O T H E F I R S T B O O K.

F A B L E I.

The Trees and the Bramble.

*T*HE most worthless persons are generally the most presuming.

F A B L E II.

The Frogs desiring a King.

'Tis better to bear with some defects in a mild and gentle government, than to risque the greater evils of tyranny and persecution.

F A B L E III.

The Belly and the Limbs.

'Tis a folly even to wish to withhold our part from the support of civil government.

F A B L E IV.

The Wolf and the Shepherds.

We severely censure that in others, which we ourselves practise without scruple.

F A B L E V.

The Fox and the Swallow.

We should well consider, whether the removal of a present evil does not tend to introduce a greater.

I N D E X.

F A B L E VI.

The Fox and the Raven.

Wherever flattery gains admission, it seems to banish common-sense.

F A B L E VII.

The Fox and the Stork.

We should always reflect, before we rally another, whether we can bear to have the jest retorted.

F A B L E VIII.

The Daw with the borrowed Feathers.

To aim at figure by the means either of borrowed wit, or borrowed money, generally subjects us at last to tenfold ridicule.

F A B L E IX.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

They who do not feel the sentiments of humanity will seldom listen to the pleas of reason.

F A B L E X.

The Mountain in Labour.

To raise uncommon expectations, renders an ordinary event ridiculous.

F A B L E XI.

The Boys and the Frogs.

'Tis unjust and cruel to raise ourselves mirth at the expence of another's peace and happiness.

F A B L E XII.

The Lark and her Young-ones.

We should rely principally upon our own diligence, in matters that concern ourselves alone.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XIII.

The Stag drinking.

*We often make a false estimate in preferring our
ornamental talents to our useful ones.*

F A B L E XIV.

The Swallow and other Birds.

*Some will listen to no conviction but what they de-
rive from fatal experience.*

F A B L E XV.

The Ass and the Lap-dog.

*The attempt to recommend ourselves by a behaviour
foreign to our character, is vain and ridiculous.*

F A B L E XVI.

The Lion and the Mouse.

*We may all need the assistance of our inferiors; and
should by no means consider the meanest among them
as wholly incapable of returning an obligation.*

F A B L E XVII.

The Wolf and the Crane.

*'Tis the utmost extent of some mens gratitude, barely
to refrain from oppressing and injuring their bene-
factors.*

F A B L E XVIII.

The Country-man and the Snake.

*To confer either power upon the mischievous, or fa-
vours on the undeserving, is a misapplcation of
our benevolence.*

F A B L E XIX.

The Dog and the Shadow.

*An over-greedy disposition often subjects us to lose
what we already possess.*

I N D E X.

F A B L E XX.

The Sun and the Wind.

Gentle means, on many occasions, are more effectual than violent ones.

F A B L E XXI.

The Wolf and the Mastiff.

A mere competence with liberty, is preferable to servitude amid the greatest affluence.

F A B L E XXII.

Fortune and the School-boy.

We are always ready to censure fortune for the ill effects of our own carelessness.

F A B L E XXIII.

The Frog and the Ox.

The silly ambition to vie with our superiors, in regard to outward figure, rather than inward accomplishments, is often the cause of utter ruin.

F A B L E XXIV.

The Lion and other Beasts hunting.

An association with two powerful allies is always imprudent.

F A B L E XXV.

The Ant and the Fly.

The independence acquired by industry is preferable to the most splendid state of vassalage.

F A B L E XXVI.

The Bear and the two Friends.

Goats are incapable of true friendship.

F A B L E XXVII.

The Bull and the Gnat.

The least considerable of all mankind are seldom destitute of self importance.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXVIII.

The Wasp and the Bees.

'Tis a folly to arrogate works to ourselves of which we are by no means capable.

F A B L E XXIX.

The Old Man and Death.

Men under calamity may seem to wish for Death, but they seldom bid him welcome when he stares them in the face.

F A B L E XXX.

The Court and the Country-Mouse.

Poverty with peace is preferable to the greatest affluence amidst anxiety.

F A B L E XXXI.

The Fox and the Goat.

When we are going to encounter difficulties, we should depend more upon our own strength than the assistance of our neighbours.

F A B L E XXXII.

The Farmer, the Cranes and the Stork.

They who keep bad company must often expect to suffer for the misbehaviour of their companions.

F A B L E XXXIII.

The Oak and the Willow.

The courage of meeting death in an honourable cause, is more commendable, than any address or artifice we can make use of to evade it.

F A B L E XXXIV.

The Boy and the Filberts.

The surest way to gain our ends is to moderate our desires.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXXV.

The Satyr and the Traveller.

We should immediately decline all commerce with a person whom we find to be a double-dealer.

F A B L E XXXVI.

The Horse and the Stag.

Let revenge be ever so sweet, 'tis too dear a purchase at the price of liberty.

F A B L E XXXVII.

The Farmer and his Sons.

Industry is itself a treasure.

F A B L E XXXVII.

The Lion and the Gnat.

Little minds are so much elevated by any advantage gained over their superiors, that they are often thrown off their guard against a sudden change of fortune.

F A B L E XXXIX.

The Miser and his Treasure.

'Tis the enjoyment of what we possess that alone gives it any real value.

F A B L E XL.

Minerva's Olive.

Whatever fancy may determine, the standing value of all things is in proportion to their use.

F A B L E XLI.

The Mimick and the Country-man.

There is no error too extravagant for prepossession and partiality.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XLII.

The Dog and the Crocodile.

'Tis ever dangerous to be long conversant with persons of a bad character.

F A B L E XLIII.

The Wolf in Disguise.

There would be little chance of detecting hypocrisy, were it not always addicted to over-act its part.

F A B L E XLIV.

The Bee and the Spider.

Neither ingenuity nor learning are intitled to regard, but in proportion as they contribute to the happiness of life.

F A B L E XLV.

The Ass and his Master.

Avarice often misses its point, thro' the means it uses to secure it.

F A B L E XLVI.

The Cock and the Fox.

To retort the artifice employed against us is an allowable part of self-defence.

F A B L E XLVII.

The Eagle and the Crow.

A false estimate of our own abilities ever exposes us to ridicule, and sometimes to danger.

F A B L E XLVIII.

The Farmer and the Stag.

Some expect the thanks that are due to a civility, while they endeavour clandestinely to undermine the value of it.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XLIX.

The Lion, the Tiger, and the Fox.

The intemperate rage of clients gives the lawyer an opportunity of seizing the property in dispute.

F A B L E L.

The Lion and the As.

A total neglect is the best return the generous can make to the scurility of the base.

F A B L E LI.

The Snake and the Hedge-hog.

'Tis ever imprudent to join interests with those who are able to impose upon us their own conditions.

F A B L E LII.

The Trumpeter.

The fomentor of mischief is at least as culpable as he who puts it in execution.

F A B L E LIII.

Vice and Fortune.

Fortune, without the concurrence of vice, cannot effectually destroy our happiness: whereas vice, without the help of fortune, can make us miserable to the last extremity.

F A B L E LIV.

The Bear and the Bees.

'Twere more prudent to acquiesce under an injury from a single person, than by an act of vengeance to bring upon us the resentment of a whole community.

I N D E X

I N D E X
T O T H E
S E C O N D B O O K.

F A B L E I.

The Miller, his Son, and their Asfs.

’TIS better to pursue the dictates of one’s own reason, than attempt to please all mankind.

F A B L E II.

The Sorcerers.

There are numbers of people who would unhinge the world, to ease themselves of the smallest inconvenience.

F A B L E III.

The Cameleon.

The different lights, in which things appear to different judgments, recommend candor to the opinions of others, even at the time that we retain our own.

F A B L E IV.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

The young and artless should make caution supply the place of years and experience.

F A B L E V.

The Fox and the Bramble.

We should bear with patience a small evil, when it is connected with a greater good.

I N D E X.

F A B L E VII.

The Falcon and the Hen.

Different kinds of experience account for different kinds of conduct.

F A B L E - VII.

The Travellers and the Money-bag.

We cannot reasonably expect those to bear a part in our ill-fortune, whom we never permitted to share in our prosperity.

F A B L E VIII.

The discontented As.

We greatly diminish the happiness of life, by undervaluing all that is short of perfection.

F A B L E IX.

The two Springs.

There is more to be expected from sedate and silent, than from noisy, turbulent, and ostentatious beginnings.

F A B L E X.

The Butterfly and the Rose.

We exclaim loudly against that inconstancy in another to which we give occasion by our own.

F A B L E XI.

The Tortoise and the two Ducks.

Curiosity often excites those people to hazardous undertakings, whom vanity and indiscretion render totally unfit for them.

F A B L E XII.

The Cat and the old Rat.

Repeated instances of artifice create a suspicion, that is our guard against it.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XIII.

The Country-maid and the Milk-pail.

When we dwell much on distant and chimerical advantages, we neglect our present business, and are exposed to real misfortunes.

F A B L E XIV.

The Cormorant and the Fishes.

'Tis extreme folly to ask advice of an interested adviser.

F A B L E XV.

The Atheist and the Acorn.

He who disputes the existence of a deity, will find himself confuted by every part of nature.

F A B L E XVI.

The Lynx and the Mole.

We should use the talents that are allotted, and are most suitable to our species; instead of disparaging those faculties, that are as properly adapted to another.

F A B L E XVII.

The Spider and the Silk-worm.

He that is employed in works of use generally advantages himself or others; while he who toils alone for fame must often expect to lose his labour.

F A B L E XVIII.

The Bee and the Fly.

The greatest genius with a vindictive temper is far surpass'd in point of happiness by men of talents less considerable.

F A B L E XIX.

Genius, Virtue, and Reputation.

There are few things so irreparably lost, as reputation.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XX.

The Court of Death.

Intemperance is the great and original cause, that generally shortens human life.

F A B L E XXI.

Industry and Sloth.

Our term of life does not allow time for long protracted deliberations.

F A B L E XXII.

The Hare's Ears.

A prudent person will not only preserve his innocence, but avoid the consequence of any seeming handle he may afford to his oppressor.

F A B L E XXIII.

The Hermit and the Bear.

The random zeal of inconsiderate friends is often as hurtful as the wrath of enemies.

F A B L E XXIV.

The Passenger and the Pilot.

We are no where out of the reach of providence, either to punish or to protect us.

F A B L E XXV.

The impartial Judge.

The injuries we do, and those we suffer, are seldom weighed in the same scales.

F A B L E XXVI.

The Fox that had lost his Tail.

'Tis common for men to wish others reduced to their own level; and we ought to guard against such advice as may proceed from this principle.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXVII.

The Nobleman and his Son.

*The means suggested by superstition to secure us from
misfortune often bring it upon our heads.*

F A B L E XXVIII.

Jupiter and the Herdsman.

*Were our ill-judged prayers to be always granted,
how many would be ruined at their own request!*

F A B L E XXIX.

The Eagle and the Owl.

*The partiality of parents often makes themselves ridi-
culous, and their children unhappy.*

F A B L E XXX.

The Plague among the Beasts.

*The poor and helpless undergo those punishments for
small and trivial offences, which the rich and
powerful escape, for crimes of a much blacker
nature.*

F A B L E XXXI.

The Cat, the Cock, and the young Mouse.

It is not safe to trust to outward appearances.

F A B L E XXXII.

The Farmer and his Dog.

*The greater room there appears for resentment, the
more careful should we be not to accuse an inno-
cent person.*

F A B L E XXXIII.

The Gnat and the Bee.

*Men expostulate to little purpose, when their own
example confutes their argument.*

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXXIV.

The Owl and the Eagle.

Narrow minds think the system of the universe should have been contrived to suit themselves alone.

F A B L E XXXV.

The Lion, the Wolf, and the Fox.

Men, who meditate mischief, suggest the same to others; and generally pay dear for their froward gratifications.

F A B L E XXXVI.

The Blind Man and the Lame.

The wants and weaknesses of individuals form the connections of society.

F A B L E XXXVII.

The Lion, the Bear, the Monkey, and the Fox.

It is often more prudent to suppress our sentiments, than either to flatter or to rail.

F A B L E XXXVIII.

The Owl and the Nightingale.

'Tis natural for a pedant to despise those arts which polish our manners, and would extirpate pedantry.

F A B L E XXXIX.

The Ant and the Caterpillar.

Boys of no very promising appearance often become the greatest men.

F A B L E XL.

The two Foxes.

We should ever guard against those vices, that are chiefly incident to our times of life: excess and riot, whilst we are young; and egregious parsimony, as we grow in years.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XLI.

The conceited Owl.

Schemes of ambition, without proper talents, always terminate in disgrace.

F A B L E XLII.

The Fox and the Cat.

Persons may write fine systems of morality, who never practised a single virtue.

F A B L E XLIII.

The two Horses.

The object of our pride is often the cause of our misfortunes.

F A B L E XLIV.

The Dove and the Ant.

The most important actions are often performed by the most unlikely instruments.

F A B L E XLV.

The Parrot.

Gravity, tho' sometimes the mien of wisdom, is often found to be the mask of ignorance.

F A B L E XLVI.

The Cat and the Bat.

It is easy to find reasons to justify any thing we are inclined to do.

F A B L E XLVII.

The two Lizards.

The superior safety of an obscure and humble station, is a balance for the honours of high and envied life.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XLVIII.

Jupiter's Lottery.

Folly, passing with men for wisdom, makes each contented with his own share of understanding.

F A B L E XLIX.

The litigious Cats.

The scales of Judicature are seldom poised, 'till little or nothing remains in either.

F A B L E L.

The two Dogs.

Our own moderation will not secure us from disturbance, if we connect ourselves with men of turbulent and litigious dispositions.

F A B L E LI.

Death and Cupid.

The young should not act as tho' they were exempt from Death; nor the old forget to guard against the fooleries of Love.

F A B L E LII.

The Mock-bird.

Ridicule appears with a very ill grace, in persons who possess no one talent beside.

F A B L E LIII.

The Spectacles.

Our opinions of things are altogether as various, as if each saw them thro' a different medium; our attachment to these opinions as fixed and firm, as if all saw them thro' the medium of truth.

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I N D E X

T O T H E

T H I R D B O O K.

F A B L E I.

The Red-breast and the Sparrow.

IMITATION may be pardonable, where emulation will be presumptuous.

F A B L E II.

The two Bees.

Moderation and intemperance reward and punish themselves.

F A B L E III.

The Diamond and the Glow-worm.

A strong point of light is as favourable to merit, as it is destructive to imposture.

F A B L E IV.

The Ostrich and the Pelican.

The pleasures of parental fondness make large amends for all its anxieties.

F A B L E V.

The Hounds in Couples.

Mutual compliances are necessary to matrimonial happiness.

F A B L E VI.

The Miser and the Magpye.

Men are seldom found to condemn themselves, otherwise than by the censure they pass upon their own faults in other people.

I N D E X.

F A B L E VII.

The Sensitive Plant and the Thistle.

*Both a mild disposition, and a vindictive temper,
generally meet with suitable returns.*

F A B L E VIII.

The Poet and the Death-watch.

*The suggestions of vanity are as delusive as those of
superstition.*

F A B L E IX.

Pythagoras and the Critic.

*To estimate the works of others by the sole standard of
our own conceptions is always presumptuous, and
often ridiculous.*

F A B L E X.

The Bear.

*Religious opinions are by no means the proper objects
of ridicule.*

F A B L E XI.

The Stork and the Crow.

*We should never place the essence of religion in the
mere observance of rites and ceremonies.*

F A B L E XII.

Echo and the Owl.

*The vain believe their imaginary perfections engross
the attention of all mankind.*

F A B L E XIII.

Prometheus.

*The blessing of hope is better adapted to the state of
mortals, than the gift of prescience.*

I N D E X.
F A B L E XIV.

Momus.

It is hardly possible to deprive malevolence of every occasion for a cavil.

F A B L E XV.

The Butterfly, the Snail, and the Bee.

Fops may boast of their extensive travels, but 'tis only a few discerning persons that make a proper use of them.

F A B L E XVI.

The Tuberose and the Sun-flower.

To rest in second causes without reference to the first, is both impious and absurd.

F A B L E XVII.

The Magpye and the Raven.

The fop who prides himself upon a large acquaintance is but seldom capable of real friendship.

F A B L E XVIII.

The Diamond and the Loadstone.

The greatest merit is often concealed under the most unpromising appearances.

F A B L E XIX.

The Boy and the Nettle.

There are certain persons who require to be treated rather with spirit and resolution, than either tenderness or delicacy.

F A B L E XX.

The Monster in the Sun.

The fault we many times impute to a character, is only to be found in the mind of the observer.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXI.

The discontented Bee.

The pleasures of life would be a balance for the pains, did we not increase the latter by your own perverseness.

F A B L E XXII.

The Snipe shooter.

We often miss our point by dividing our attention.

F A B L E XXIII.

The Beggar and his Dog.

'Tis misery to depend upon patrons, whose circumstances make their charity necessary at home.

F A B L E XXIV.

The Sun and the Vapour.

Truth, though vanisb'd, returns again; slander is never of a durable nature.

F A B L E XXV.

Love and Folly.

Folly has often too great an influence in the direction of our amours.

F A B L E XXVI.

The Eclipse.

The favours of the great are too often obstructed by the invidious offices of their mean dependants.

F A B L E XXVII.

The Boy and the Butterfly.

An immoderate pursuit of pleasure is generally destructive of its object.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXVIII.

The Toad and the Ephemeron.

A lazy reliance on the antiquity of a family is by far less honourable than an honest industry.

F A B L E XXIX.

The Peacock.

The parade and ceremony belonging to the great are often a restraint upon their freedom and activity.

F A B L E XXX.

The Fly in St. Paul's Cupola.

We should never estimate things beyond our reach, by the narrow standard of our own capacities.

F A B L E XXXI.

The Elm-tree and the Vine.

People who pride themselves upon their independence, often slight œconomy, the sole foundation of it.

F A B L E XXXII.

The Laurustinus and the Rose.

That friend is highly to be respected at all times, whose friendship is chiefly distinguished in adversity.

F A B L E XXXIII.

The Sensitive-plant and the Palm-tree.

An excess of delicacy is to be considered rather as an infirmity than as a virtue.

F A B L E XXXIV.

The Tentyrites and the Ichneumon.

We conquer many evil's at first with facility, which being long neglected become unsurmountable.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXXV.

The Tulip and the Rose.

External beauty will often captivate ; but 'tis internal merit that secures the conquest.

F A B L E XXXVI.

The Woodcock and the Mallard.

A voracious appetite, and a fondness for dainties equally take off our attention from more material concerns.

F A B L E XXXVII.

The Trouts and the Gudgeon.

A person can hardly be deemed too cautious, where the first mistake is irretrievable, or fatal.

F A B L E XXXVIII.

The Stars and the Sky-rocket.

Pretenders to merit are always more vain than those who really possess it.

F A B L E XXXIX.

The Farmer and his three Enemies.

Humility extenuates any crime, of which hypocrisy and impudence are equal aggravations.

F A B L E XL.

The Snail and the Statue.

'Tis the fate of envy to attack those characters that are superior to its malice.

F A B L E XLI.

The Water-fall.

A generous nature will find resources in oeconomy, for the occasional exertion of beneficence and hospitality.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XLII.

The Oak and the Sycamore.

*He who is puffed up with the least gale of prosperity,
will as suddenly sink beneath the blasts of misfortune.*

F A B L E XLIII.

The Wolf and the Shepherd's Dog.

*Common honesty is a better principle than what we
often compliment with the name of heroism.*

F A B L E XLIV.

The Mushroom and the Acorn.

*The man who values himself too highly upon his birth,
has seldom much claim to any other merit.*

F A B L E XLV.

Wisdom and Cunning.

*Cunning seems to differ from wisdom, more in the end
that it proposes to itself, than in the means that it
employs.*

F A B L E XLVI.

The Toad and the Gold-fish.

*Beauty joined with innocence is universally respected;
malice added to deformity as universally abhorred.*

F A B L E XLVII.

The Hermit.

*The goodness of Providence, apparent in his works,
is a proper motive for our tranquillity amidst every
exertion of his power.*

F A B L E XLVIII.

The Dove.

*The love of liberty, in well constituted minds, holds
a place little inferior to that of natural affection.*

I N D E X.

F A B L E XLIX.

The Nightingale and the Bullfinch.

Learning is undoubtedly of the utmost advantage to real genius: yet, when put in competition, the funds of the one are limited; and of the other inexhaustible.

F A B L E L.

The Fighting Cocks and the Turkey.

Litigious persons seldom consider before they go to law, whether the conquest will be worth the cost.

F A B L E LI.

The King-fisher and the Sparrow.

Mens natural tempers will best direct them to their proper sphere in the pursuit of happiness.

F A B L E LII.

The Spider and the Bee.

The candid reader will reap improvement, where the froward critic finds only matter of censure.

F I N I S.

